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# AT HOME IN PARIS.

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# AT HOME IN PARIS.

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BY

BLANCHARD JERROLD,

AUTHOR OF

"THE CHRISTIAN VAGABOND," "THE CHILDREN OF LUTETIA,"  
ETC., ETC.

*2d series.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
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**DISCARDED**

## PREFACE.

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THE following pages were in type at the moment of their Author's death. The first volume had already been corrected by his hand; the second has lacked that advantage. It has been our privilege to do what little we could to remedy the defect, and, generally, to prepare the book for the press.

EVELYN AND SIDNEY JERROLD.

*July, 1884.*

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# CONTENTS.

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THE GAVROCHE PARTY: BEING LITERARY ESTIMATES OF THE FALL OF THE SECOND EMPIRE, 1868- 1870 :—	PAGE
Introductory—1870 . . . . .	1
French Men of Letters . . . . .	5
The Paris Cockney Writer . . . . .	11
Ruffles for the Shirtless . . . . .	18
The Father of the French Academy . . . . .	25
Pitiless Literature . . . . .	33
Rochefort and his <i>Lanterne</i> . . . . .	41
The <i>Lanterne</i> darkened . . . . .	51
The <i>Cloche</i> of Ferragus . . . . .	58
The Journalism of 1848 and 1869 . . . . .	62
The Days of June, 1869 . . . . .	69
King Hugo . . . . .	78
Cæsar is Ill . . . . .	83
The Pantin Tragedy . . . . .	90
The Liberties of England and France . . . . .	97
Agitation in England and France . . . . .	105
The French Radical . . . . .	112

	PAGE
<b>THE GAVROCHE PARTY—<i>cont.</i></b>	
Belleville Orators . . . . .	118
Gavroche's Candidate . . . . .	127
Citizen Felix Pyat's Manifesto . . . . .	136
François Victor Hugo's Argument . . . . .	144
Felix Pyat on the Sovereign People . . . . .	155
Prévost-Paradol in England . . . . .	161
The Rise of the "Bonnet Rouge" . . . . .	169
<b>THE OBSERVATIONS OF MONSIEUR CHOSE:—</b>	
I.—Monsieur Chose's Last Bite . . . . .	170
II.—Monsieur Chose makes his Observations . . . . .	179
III.—To the Tribune by Rail . . . . .	189
IV.—Monsieur the President of—What is it? . . . . .	198
V.—A Polonaise—Pain de Siège . . . . .	209
VI.—The Boulevard Gavroche . . . . .	216
VII.—Madame Chose at Versailles . . . . .	224
VIII.—At Dominoes . . . . .	233
IX.—The Feathers of the Eagle . . . . .	240
X.—The White Mice . . . . .	248
XI.—The Little Man is Still Kicking . . . . .	256
XII.—The Death of Captain Tonnerre . . . . .	262
<b>THE MONTREUX GOAT-HERD . . . . .</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>GOODMAN MISERY . . . . .</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>SUPPING MEN OF ROGER DE BEAUVOIR'S TIME . . . . .</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>HIS EXCELLENCY M. ROUGON . . . . .</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>CITIZEN GUGUSSE AT PLAY . . . . .</b>	<b>338</b>

# AT HOME IN PARIS.

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## THE GAVROCHE PARTY.

BEING

*Literary Estimates of the Fall of the Second Empire.*

1868-1870.

---

“ Est-il donc vrai que toute chose  
Puisse être ainsi foulée aux pieds ;  
Le rocher où l'aigle repose  
Comme la feuille de la rose,  
Qui tombe et meurt dans nos sentiers.”

A. DE MUSSET.

---

### INTRODUCTORY : 1870.

To the sound of the drum always, and frantic drumming ; with pencil as well as pen as twin drum-sticks—and drum-majors for editors ! Drum-head education : drum-head elections : drum-head proclamations of peace, and fraternity, and goodwill : drum-head judgments on all who happen to think quietly and soberly, or will not make a *prie-Dieu* of the Republican sheep's-skin. A paper peppered with lanterns, in which the wick has burned very low, and showing monkeys playing antics with drums over every paragraph that settles,

I.

1

17

in a few spasms, a question which has vexed noble minds for many years! Screams, instead of the self-contained resonance of rational genius. The comedy is that of the *ducasse*. The ideas heaped together with red-hot shovels, are as incongruous and shabby as the contents of a clown's pocket. The mummers draw the foolish crowd around an honest citizen's grave. Could he wake and speak, he would say—"Begone from the Field of Rest, and don't mime profound emotion (with an eye to the reporters) where I lie. Leave my grave, and the air fresh and unpolluted to keep the leaves green which loving hands that never handled drum-sticks to call the world to see their tenderness, have, unseen, and wanting to be unseen, laid upon my bosom. I did my honest work, fought my courageous fight, as became a man. Begone, and vex me not with this burlesque."

A man, after many years of exile, passes home—to prove the prudence of putting him beyond the frontiers while order was in course of re-establishment on the wrecks of Liberty, left by the clashing of selfish, half-educated men, who would not understand that freedom rests secure on a series of compromises; on deference among disputants; on respect for opponents; on each man's admission that human reason is fallible, and that he may be in the wrong. He returns—he and an unwelcome host after his kind—to show Liberty in her most

illiberal moods and forms and tempers : with mud in both hands, and boiling pitch between her teeth, to scatter upon all who have not the happiness to agree with him and his, that Society wants to be picked to bits, like a salad, and “*fatigued*” in a republican bowl with the fork of Hugo and the spoon of Rochefort, and—his own vinegar. But the illustration fails—there is no oil !

M. Félix Pyat, dwelling on the means at hand to turn society upside down, that he and others may come to the surface (and the term must be mathematically complete to put some of them *en évidence*), cites the example of England. It is on this ground that I pretend to join issue with—the GAVROCHE PARTY !

But I beg permission to turn back the leaves of the Book of Days a little, in order to justify myself ; by showing that I have watched the growth of Liberty in the arms of Order, before the laws of the Second Empire permitted Monsieur Félix Pyat to add himself to the ranks of the republican combatants who, I might say if I used their own weapons, are ready to pull down the entire fabric of society, that they may share the coins in the cavity of the foundation-stone. I have advanced, watching step by step the developments of the party which is putting the liberties of the people in jeopardy—as the reader will perceive—who shall have the patience to follow me.



French men of letters seldom spare one another, and are pitiless towards their enemies. Poor Viennet could not be carried unmolested to his grave. We find passages as scandalous as the worst literary appearances of Scarron's time in the French journalism of this year. The *Rappel* draws a parallel at length between the Emperor and his ministers, and Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples ! I find a "*très jolie satire*," by Rochefort, of which one line runs—

A Jésus-Christ j'ai prêté mes vieux gants.

Men are dealt with like I pupazzi of Lemer cier de Neuville. As we approach the present, even from only two or three years back, we find the spice becomes hotter : the hate more bitter : the disrespect profounder and wider spread. The very roots of society are loosening. M. Rochefort, intoxicated with the noise of his street mobs, casts wildly about for stronger flavours for his poisonous dishes. His clients crave the most biting food, since he has almost paralyzed their palates : not weekly, but daily : not in the *Lanterne*, but in the *Marseillaise*. He had a burning desire to call ministers calves with two heads, and lepers, more than a year ago ; so that the lowest argot must appear only spoon-meat to him by this time.

Let us turn back a few months.

---

## FRENCH MEN OF LETTERS.

March, 1868.

THE manner in which French men of letters discuss their own interests offers some tempting features to our insular prosaic minds. We had our meeting of the Literary Fund the other day in London, and it was as orderly as a group of expectants gathered together in a bishop's parlour. Our Observatory suggests Lyly's profoundly quiet hermitage, where a mouse was sleeping in a cat's ear. Our Premier—albeit English literature is not, I apprehend, Tory in the main—is announced to preside over our Fund-supporters in a week or two, at that altar of British charity the dinner-table. A starched, snowy cravat will be about every literate weasand on that occasion; and a due number of acre representatives will sit on the right side of “the pale spectrum of the salt.” When gentlemen are looking for their hats, and Lady Domaine's carriage is stopping the way to Belgravia, “The Press” will be proposed by a lordship, who will be briefly civil; and everybody will go contentedly and decently home to bed, reflect that the rent and taxes are paid, that church was duly attended twice last Sunday, that the house is being properly painted this spring ere the violets have broken through the fog, and that baby has

successfully teethed at the exact time when, according to the doctor, well-regulated infants should teethe. In 1855, M. Théophile Gautier,—“the great Théo,”—in opening his *Moniteur* studies of the British School of Art (one of our national infant-schools, according to most Frenchmen), was pleased to observe that “English Art was always aristocratic *et gentleman*.” So is English literature. I am sure Frenchmen have a fixed idea that a powdered footman bears away the inspirations of our insular Parnassus to the outer and vulgar world, ranged in unbroken rows, and silent as the highway Sphinxes of Egypt. We have the reputation of being a starched race, not wholly liberated from the “spleen” in our most convivial moments; and never rising beyond the gaiety or grace of well-read *croque-mortes* in our wit-bouts. Our Bohemianism is heavy; our rags are ruled; we take the exact, pre-arranged number of cups every evening. The British literary upper-crust is smooth as the chin of a gentleman-usher, and dallies with fretted silver and fine linen, and is ferocious about the *bienséances*. There is etiquette in our poetry, respectability in our history, ceremonial sharpness in the conduct of our essay. When Black Rod—or, indeed, any other awful Rod—shall preface his summons with a double shuffle, and the Lord Chancellor shall lie at his ease stretched upon the woolsack, his brow covered with a handkerchief

to keep the flies off (flies being democratic in their most inner consciousness),—then, and not till then, will the English literary man, “*qui se respecte*” take to an independent walk, get locks of hair flowing from his shoulders, smile upon a sugar-loaf hat, and, in fine, browbeat decent society. There are people to whom the act of puffing a fluted column of smoke into a king’s face is an excellent expression of independence; as I can conceive of a company in which it would be good manners to eat your peas with your knife, the edge diligently kept towards the lips.

It is unfortunate that we are behind the times; that our independence is all angles. We have good instincts; we make a solid front against every attack upon our rights; but we are humpish, and look reverently at traditions, and permit masters of the ceremonies to trim our lamps. We are backward enough to be loyal, and formal enough to draw severe lines limiting the exercise of our descriptive faculties something short of our neighbours’ bedroom and kitchen; hence we are tame in colour as Quakers’ drab when we are set beside our brethren of the banks of the Seine. Because our russet grey encases us, I shall not presume to say that we are monopolists in taste, and that the Gallic bird of wisdom, being of gay plumage, has not sweet notes in his throat.

But albeit these are times of universal travel;

and it is the lot of crowds of men to see things which would be strange indeed at their own hearths; there are views of the French literary and scientific man which have not ceased to provoke our wonder, although the South-Eastern folk have been advertising the easy possibility of taking breakfast in London and an early dinner in Paris between the rising and the setting of the sun. Of late these views have been singularly brilliant and suggestive; and I have taken some observations, which I will endeavour to lay clearly before my readers. The literary waters have been sharply rippled, by winds from all quarters of the compass. A jury of honour has been sitting. The legislative body has been busy with the press, and therefore with the doings and pretensions of journalists. A clause has been drawn about the life of the Second Empire—like a screen about a sick bed in an hospital ward. There has been turmoil among the dramatists. M. Hugo is implored to return to his country, and take his place among the lawgivers of the Opposition. We shall see the kind of answer he will make. The cry of sailors of a painted ship upon a painted ocean has given pause to Cæsar by the budding chestnuts of the Tuileries gardens. M. Henri Rochefort is so astonished at the attitude taken by M. Le-verrier, that he will find it difficult henceforth, he declares, to distinguish the line which separates

the philosopher from the pork-butcher. And, to come to the most serious matters, M. Jules Claretie quotes a few lines on the author of "The Life of Jesus," written, we are assured, by a very grave critic indeed. These lines, to quote a favourite phrase, illustrate an era. M. Rochefort, who is the prince of sneerers—a full blossom of the Second Empire—has never written in the slippers of prose anything so startling in the way of audacity as these lines, marshalled in all the cadence and full dress of verse. We have M. Renan's "relations with the Divinity" measured to us by a cool scoffer, who, uninfluenced by the theme and the presence, weighs his syllables as though he were portioning ounces of acidulated drops for children. These three strophes are selected as sample bits from a "*très jolie satire*":—

Je suis d'ailleurs plus malin que Voltaire.  
A tout hasard, s'il est un paradis  
Pour demeurer bien avec Dieu le père  
En pension j'ai pris monsieur son fils.

Des dieux mal mis nous n'avons plus le culte,  
Nous ne voulons que des dieux élégants,  
Et pour qu'il ne parût pas trop inculte  
A Jésus-Christ j'ai prêté mes vieux gants.

A bout du temps de son apprentissage,  
En nous quittant nous nous embrasserons,  
Il m'est venu simple dieu du village,  
J'en aurai fait le Jésus des salons !

More than two hundred years have passed and gone since Scarron provoked a mania for burlesque, and nothing was sacred in the hands of the expert literary buffoon. About 1649 appeared a little, poor work, "*La Passion de Notre Seigneur, en vers burlesques.*" Is the French literary bark tacking back to that time? There is a fierce light beating about literary life here, and the *persiflage* is everywhere. M. de Kervéguen is pursued with a vigour that is exceedingly suspicious, because he has stirred into depths which it is not expedient to fathom. The peccant deputy, however, is, it seems to me, a mild man when compared with the literary sinners against men of letters. It is hard in a pelting-bout, when a man, who has thrown just one stone, is thrust forward for punishment by the very fellows who have worn out their slings in the fight.

I am inclined to submit an example or two\* of the pen encounters, and the weapons now used, in French literary difficulties. The friendly sparring is sharp, and, to our sight, strange. When the *gens de lettres* are under criticism, or there is a difference as to the new whereabouts of the Observatory, the moot point being a removal of scientific

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\* These examples make a natural preface to the literary violences which are now the every-day weapons of the Gavroche party.

sentinels to Fontenay-aux-Roses, it is not with roses the disputants pelt each other,—as I shall, I think, show.

---

## THE PARIS COCKNEY WRITER.

April 1, 1868.

THERE is no cockney like the Paris cockney. He surveys the eternities through the atmosphere of the Boulevards. Has he a classical fit? He votes for a *filet* of Pegasus *truffé*, and will have his nectar in a *litre* measure. He nicely calculates *ses lignes* upon the slopes of Parnassus. For the sake of a smile, he degrades heroic deeds with commonplace images. Mrs. Grundy has no French sister.

There has been—there is—commotion among the naturally turbulent gentlemen who compose the Société des Gens de Lettres. The Government has, through M. Duruy, intimated to the Council that a State grant of 6,000 francs will be afforded to the Society this year. Whereupon the Society falls under the critical eye of more than one *chroniqueur*. The time for M. Duruy's bounty is in truth ill-chosen. Sainte-Pélagie is full; and one trenchant writer observes that since there is not prison-room for all the poor authors, and the Dubois Asylum charges for its beds, help is needful to the worn-out jockeys of the race. The State gives the price of a carriage-horse. The poor literati are



to wait patiently in the vestibule of death, roofed with a bounty that would not buy young Numskull a hack for the Bois. They who have not been hostile enough to command a cell in the prison through the bars of which Béranger sang to the world of friendship;\* who have no scandalous correspondence with the great to sell, and who have not produced popular stuff for the common market, must have aid, even to be able to wear out the dusty shell upon a Dubois mattress. Six thousand francs are to "gild the agony" of these honest folk, *Ferragus* records. This sum is an advance of one thousand francs on the grant of last year; but then the crust is dearer than it was; and we have reached times when in the poor man's *carte* pump-water threatens to be a *supplement*.

The obolus burns in the palm of the honest hand—when there are so many dishonest fingers about that are burnished to the nail-tips. The gardener who has the privilege of strewing the literary path with roses dwells, or lately dwelt, in the Rue Bellechasse, had a sentry at his gate, and the imperial eagle looked approvingly down upon him from a flagstaff as he entered his brougham.

---

\* Que fait la gloire a qui succombe !  
Amis, renonçons à briller ;  
Donnons les marbres d'une tombe,  
Pour les plumes d'un oreiller.

In the flesh of sensitive men the balmy coolness of the petals would not heal the wound of the thorns ; the rosy kiss reached not the blood-well bored by the golden arrow smuggled under the leaf. There is ever a race known in official parlance as "difficult people : " a race the skin of whom will not harden. The supply of tough hides for every-day use has not, however, failed yet ; and these are ready to take a turn on poor Pegasus in any livery which includes a pocket and a purse. Virtue is at her wit's end for a hiding-place very often ; and when she is angered with her buffetings she will turn and have at the tough-skins who mimic her shivering fits and feast on *terrines*, while she nibbles the coarse leaf of a leek. Just now, according to *Ferragus*, she has driven the following into the hide of prosperous jockeys who wear the green :—

Aux fond secrets, pour ses vertus,  
 Puisant à flots, *un tel* s'écrie :  
 Mille écus par mois, mille écus !  
 C'est moins d'un sou par calomnie.

The crowns of the State handed to the Gens de Lettres are, we are told, for literary gruel. Secret *écus* flow into the golden chariots of the Gens de Lettres—de la Maison de l'Empereur ! Pegasus, with shining eagles upon his harness, paws the Boulevards at the door of the Café Anglais. When it is his sombre business to bear any wretch

from the Société, the destination is the hospital, if not the mad-house. To these dismal outlets from the pain of life, 6,000 francs will help a few shallow scribblers, who have remained so far behind their time, that they have obstinately declined to have their reeds tuned by the police. Within the rooms of the Société there are figures, perversely progressing hither and thither on two legs, yet making poor caricatures of men, who touch their hat to M. Duruy, keep their mouths closed but their pockets gaping. The liberty of the press has been discussed; it has rained prosecutions; writers swarm in a prison; and the Société has remained the faithful copyist of the obedient creature of whom Jean Paul said, "Like a lap-dog, he lays himself at the feet of the people in power, and wags his tail." Collector of the rights of authors (rights which are but imperfectly understood in England),—purveyor of funeral orations, which have all a very strong family likeness, and not of the most handsomely endowed family,—and almsgiver to those whose "wood-notes wild" have not caught the ears of the many-headed,—these are malcontents who are not pleased to put their literary interest under the Society's wing. There has been agitation for the reform of the Society's statutes; but now the call is for secession, and for the constitution of a French literary body that shall do something more than carry the unfortunate to

the hospital, and flash a rhetorical nimbus about the skeleton head that lies in the *fosse commune*. We English understand what a schism in a literary society means. We have shown indisposition to see pence distributed to the needy among our brethren in golden ladles; we are no strangers to the art of polite and formal wrangling, which has been perfected by the long existence of our freedom in the matters of speaking, writing, and meeting. We know how to give the lie direct to "the distinguished friend" and "the hon. Member," and to convey our opinion to "the right honourable gentleman" that there is not a spark of honour in all his policy. Freedom has yielded us this art; and we have become unaccustomed to hard name-calling and violent charges. Violent charges belong to times of violence. We have passed out of these. My colleagues are not in Newgate. Parliament has not been busy gagging us; and, in a sliding scale of rights of meeting, we have not been placed lower than our dustman. In short, we have had no reason to trouble any society or club or corporation to defend us against a minister. We may excite the people to detest the Government at our good pleasure; we might urge the English public to lessen their exalted idea of the sovereign, and we should not be fined or imprisoned: we should be laughed at or despised, and put aside.

When we approach the Société des Gens de Lettres, and observe its attitude at this moment, and mark what French literary men say of the decorous gentlemen who collect M. Ponson du Terrail's rights, and bury the Murgers, it is just to take into consideration the difference there is between their platform and ours. The dog which is tied up all day, whirls about, rolls in the dust, and jumps in the air when set free for a run; the dog habitually free, moves with sober step, is well behaved, and lies upon the leopard skin to warm his sagacious nose at your study-fire. He ponders how he shall obtain an advantage over Fidèle, who is upon my lady's lap in the drawing-room, when next they meet over a bone. He will not be violent; but he is bent upon having the bone. I have a learned poodle,—Solon, we will say. Solon is tied up. I have company, and am anxious that Solon should go through his game at cards as gravely as a bishop at whist. I have only to approach him—to hold out to him a faint idea that I am going to set him at liberty—and he is upon his hind legs, and his deep baying wakes the echoes. He will not be cool and composed enough for cards for an hour to come. All this time Fidèle has been performing before the ladies without committing a mistake.

When the French Société that, in recognition of its good conduct, has received a supplementary

thousand francs of annual pocket-money, continues to please "the powers that be,"—while the press is being calumniated from the tribune, and speech and thought are receiving an extra pound or two of irons,—the men of letters, who have no taste for leashes and cannot dance in fetters, even when stamped with the eagle, nor wear in comfort a prison dress freaked with golden bees; must be excused a little wildness of epithet—some daring in imagery. While a remnant of liberty lasts, it is natural to make the most of it. Every word is at blood-heat, because the chain and the collar are in sight, and the neck that has worn them tingles still with the old chafing. Cockney epithets fall upon things which, in a settled and civilized society, all should respect. When the law says that every male child shall be born to bear a musket; when the nurseries of the generations to come smell woundily of gunpowder, and the epaulet overshadows the sword of justice, and the sabre pollutes the fountains of learning; men of genius and men of talent will not be mealy-mouthed. Sneering becomes a profession. The "arts of ambush" penetrate literature. Two literary camps are insensibly formed. Talent fills the camp, where, in the dark, pay is thrust from under the cloak of State into the scribe's hand. Genius, in serried tents, holds apart, conscious of strength that is not conquerable; patient, because sure of victory.

Genius lifts a flaming sword to smite ; but we should not overlook the lesser children who, battling in the light of holy fire, carry but a handful of pebbles and a sling. Give time, and the ants will clean the giant to his bones.

---

#### RUFFLES FOR THE SHIRTLESS.

April, 1868.

RUFFLES are provided for the shirtless Captain Pens on the French side of the Channel, as well as in the capital which includes the site of Grub Street, and received the ashes of Chatterton. The winter that is saying so many cold good-byes to us, put out the light of Elias Regnault. Of that light it is not needful to say much—save that it was held in fair esteem. Elias Regnault's story may be gathered within the length of a little finger. He died disheartened and in great poverty. On the 31st of last December his landlord gave him peremptory notice to leave. He was many quarters in arrear. On New Year's Day a little boy went to see his unhappy grandfather. Grandpapa had not a sou : but a grandpapa could not see his grandson on New Year's Day with empty hands. The old man went to his porter and borrowed two francs, with which the bag of bonbons was bought. Over the old man's grave, very soon after the sweetmeats were eaten, three eloquent orations were uttered !

Many an *oraison funèbre* has echoed along the damp lines of a *fosse commune*, and tingled in the ears of the impatient grave-digger. I remember a poor poet, a Dupont, who used to come to my hearth some fifteen years ago, pale, thin, most melancholy. He was in brown-black. Poor soul, he was full of pride and poetic affectation. Most people who met him believed that he was acting melancholy, and that there was the study of the hypocrite in the upturning of the eye. He dressed the part: but it was a weakness, not a cheat. He was of the nest of singing birds whom France should protect and love—at least, as she loves the swallows skimming the balmy air amid the flowering chestnuts, that give shade by the fountains where the hardy little navigators of the *Chaussée d'Antin* and the *Avenue de l'Impératrice* launch their boats. In his soul he believed this: that he had a claim, and that it was shamefully neglected. There were crumbs for the swallows, and none for the poets. He sang this sad ditty to many tunes, in many circles of pitying people. He was a widower, left with a little girl, whose complaints woke the saddest tones of his ever-craped harp. How to help him! A prouder man never crossed the threshold of a friend. A word of praise for his muse left out in the cold by the obdurate, money-changing world, were the alms he craved of our compassion. He had a voice that was a musical



wail. He would fold his hands, turn his white face to the burning logs, and sadden the women's hearts with his first notes :—

Dormez, ô ma fille,  
Dormez sur mon cœur ;  
Sans que mon aiguille  
Quitte sa labeur.

The song was of sweet devotion in a bitter world. The child should not wake until mother's fingers had earned the crust for the soup. Sleep keeps the stomach quiet. The beggar pillowed on his wallet may be ermine-nursed in his dreams, although he lies where the lizard shines on the rock. The policeman's thumb presses his rags, and yet he is king among men, until he is twitched into rascaldom. Why should he not rest? The royalty of his dreams has not power to loosen a bell in the cap of the king's jester? The thunder-cloud is not legal bed-covering. He must wake and put lawful lath and plaster between his beggar-limbs and the wind. Some burden to this purpose was carried on the tremulous cadences of our friend's voice. The sweetness was pressed out of the grief. Had he not suffered, he had not sung.

Years have passed since he last sipped his dish of tea with me. It may be that eloquent and touching speeches have been said over his poor bones, and that his daughter has opened her eyes upon the world that gave her father no supper for

his song. I fear it is so. I never could hear that the gipsy Fortune even glanced into his tent.

The sad ballad-writer was recalled to my mind by a comrade of his in misfortune, who not long ago was fighting the world for himself and his younglings, with an unlucky pen. The brave soldier was footsore and thirsty, and fever beat in his pulse. The black enemy was upon him, and had an eye upon his sick child's cradle. Paris was crowded; Paris was gay—gay enough to break this fainting Captain Pen's heart—in 1865. He stooped over the little stranger who was slipping away from him. The baby eyes brightened at the sight of the toys, and dimmed when tired of them. The writer was forgotten in the father, and was led into the open day presently, through love for baby. Baby must have more toys. Some caricatures lay about the floor. Had money been plentiful these would have been thrust out of sight; but when the pocket is empty, the hand wanders from it, and becomes wondrously inventive. The caricatures were cut out, pasted upon cardboard, and made to gambol ridiculously before baby, who munificently crowed acknowledgments, and cried for explanations. A light broke upon the father from the infant's sick bed, and he turned upon the world once more—this time with dolls and patter adapted to children of the fullest growth. There are happy children crowned with *chignons* and intimate with razors in

Paris, who shake their sides at Guignol in the May-days, and do honour to puppet-shows in ball dress on winter evenings; so that straw-tickling is a very important profession by the banks of the Seine. From baby's sick cradle the poor father turned to the window, to mark whether the crowd would laugh. If it would laugh, it would pay. They *did* laugh; and forth went Lemer cier de Neuville! Who has not heard of "*I pupazzi*"? The *salons* of this passing season have welcomed the clever man with his puppets and his sharp and bright patter, spiced with personal mischief. The dolls are admirable as caricatures; the talk is badinage, touched with satire lightly, as a cream is flavoured with lemon. Whom do we envy most?—the light natures that are so prone to enjoyment, or the happy father and head of the laughing household his genius has made out of the sickness of a child? Why was it not given to my poor poet-friend, who could only sing his babe to sleep, and see it wake to a thin *pot-au-feu*, to arrest the crowd from his window with his eloquent sorrow? They can laugh who cannot cry; albeit only the laughter of those who have generously wept has music in it. Tickling is better business than touching. The Punch and Judy man on our side of the Channel makes more, I take it, than the poor Italian Wordsworth sang, who bore about English lanes "blind old Milton" in the creamiest of plaster of Paris.

There are "illustrations" of the hazards of the pen abounding in the dramatic and musical "worlds," as well as in the "world" of literature. It is difficult to strike a balance, in commercial phrase, between the worldly chances of English and French men of letters; but hitherto the English public have been treated almost exclusively to accounts of the extraordinary financial successes of French journalists and romancists. The quill has raised substantial palaces, since the author of "Monte Christo" sold his; and his richly caparisoned steed pawed the ground at his gates. Men of letters in Paris are mostly men of business. We are astonished at the sums which Scribe realised, and are startled when we learn the number of thousands sterling which a new comedy pours into the coffers of the younger Dumas. Dramatic literature is a rich mine indeed in Paris, when the dramatist makes a hit. The payment of the author is more equitably arranged than it is with us. He takes his share of the profits of his work. But the complaints of the unsuccessful fill the air. The way to success is barred on all sides. Men spend a lifetime, not in getting a hearing, but in getting a reading by a manager. A dramatist, the part author of a very successful piece which appeared ten years ago, has not yet obtained a second hearing on the stage. He proved that the manager never opened his manuscripts, by dropping gum,

here and there, between the pages. Another, Nerée Desarbres relates, had Molière's "Tartuffe" copied in running lines as prose, just calling Tartuffe Pique-assiette, and so forth. The manager to whom he sent it, returned it as unfit for his stage.

A long letter is printed in the daily papers, with the startling heading, "*Une Grande Misère.*" It is an appeal to the commiseration of the theatrical authorities by E. De la Roche-Jager, an artist who has actually known successes. The complaint is—"I have ten operas in my portfolio, which have been refused without a hearing." And what is the composer's fate? "Yesterday, having neither shelter nor bread, I was compelled to get myself arrested." A pension of 110 francs per annum from the Société des Artistes, a private allowance of a like amount, and about 800 francs, the proceeds of an annual concert, are the ordinary income of the petitioner. This year the poor composer has suffered a long illness, and is now too weak to give the usual concert. The landlord proves inexorable; and the artist, whose work has been applauded, is in the streets, or sheltered as the vagabond trapped in the *banlieue* quarry is sheltered.

We gaze upon La Patti's charming residence, and wonder how many thousands are laid at night under the bewitching head of its mistress. The *salons* of Gustave Doré are crowded with the rank

and beauty and wit and wisdom of Paris ; and the owner (his own architect and builder) has hardly seen his fortieth year yet. Fortune works these wonders in Paris, and the echoes of the applause reach us in London. But mark, under La Patti's doorway the sick and heartsore creature E. De la Roche-Jager crouches ; and my poor poet is passing, in a *green* hearse, to his rest.

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## THE FATHER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

July, 1868.

THE old man is dead and buried at last ; and there can be no more laughter over his grey hairs. Paris includes one comic veteran the less. Jean P. G. Viennet is laid in the family vault ; and the regulation oratory has vibrated over his grave. A well-worn chair is open to the ambition of Janin and Gautier. The irrepressible writer and talker who took the seat of the Count de Ségur thirty-eight years ago, —who was a lieutenant in the navy in 1796, and a prisoner of war at Portsmouth in the following year,—who was decorated on the battle-field by Napoleon, after Lutzen,—who was deputy in 1827, and peer of France in 1840,—went on year after year writing satires, pamphlets, tragedies, comedies and operas, fables and epic poems ; achieved popu-

larity only to fall into that most intolerable disrepute which is manifested in the shape of jokes and squibs, and being appointed the hero of every foolish story. The satirist became the chosen victim of satire ; while his own shafts lay rotting and unregarded about him. I shall have something to say about pitiless literature. To understand it as it has grown in France of late years the reader should gather together all that has been written against the late father of the French Academy. He said of himself, with the invincible gaiety which belonged to him, and showed a brave spirit, "they counted up at least 500 epigrams a year against my person, my poetry, my parliamentary speeches,—even to my green coat. Every schoolboy, on his escape from college into journalism, believed he owed me his first kick." His biographer notes of 1834 that it was the year in which Viennet's unpopularity was at its height. Thirty-four years have passed over the vivacious Academician since he was execrated as advocate of the repressive laws which followed upon the April days of 1834. His failure as a dramatic author was, his good biographer observes, "of the completest. He brought forth both tragedy and comedy between 1803 and 1805 ; in 1820 he produced an opera ('Aspasia and Pericles'), and a tragedy ('Clovis') ; between 1813 and 1825 the gratitude of the world was challenged with five

tragedies. Alas! these works never touched a single heart; but they were the cause of merriment for years. 'Arbogaste' was played one night only, but it was before the mocking world during many circlings of the seasons, under the cruel auspices of the waspish *chroniqueurs*. The dramatic career of the wonderful old man, who defied time to dim the sparkle in his eye, and who affected to think, with a greater man, that death had forgotten him; closed in 1859, when he produced the Tartar drama, 'Selma,' at the Odéon." M. Viennet published finally an edition of his "Epîtres et Satires," the work by which he will be known, if he should be known at all; and to this edition the unconquerable satirist added a piece addressed to his eighty years. He is bold who rallies the fourscore years that track his footsteps. The writer who has been to this generation only a mark for the ridicule of men infinitely smaller than himself,—who was famous, and lived to be only ridiculous,—who kept a green place in his heart when his enemies closed about him, and were not ashamed to mock his grey hairs,—who accomplished an extraordinary amount of literary work, good and bad, and presented his country with a patiently gestated epic poem in ten cantos ("La Franciade") in his eighty-sixth year,—such a man, albeit his rage against the romantic school amounted to frenzy, should not be put out of the way in a Figaro *feuilleton*, beaded with the



word-twisting which passes for epigrammatic power on the Boulevards.

The glorious time of Jean-Pons-Guillaume Viennet, of the staff of the Royal Guard, was after the second return of the Bourbons, when his "Epitres" were appearing. The strong public feeling of the time gave them nearly all their success. The man of southern temperament had an impetuous love of freedom in him, and was gallant in his attacks; but he hit wildly, and when he thought he had felled his adversary to the earth, it was his friend who complained that he had a black eye. His weapon was bright, and of tough steel in its time. The Epistle to the Muses on the romantic writers, was a sounding war-note that gathered a host about him. He beat his drum only to draw the bees together to sting him. They called him the *vieux niais* as far back as 1834. For his good work no credit was given to him. His Epistle to the Chiffonniers on Press Offences, which a hostile biographer is constrained to describe as a bold and spirited protest against a piece of odious and ridiculous legislation, was written forty years ago. It was popular in its day, but it has been forgotten by the men whose cause it served. M. Viennet was the open enemy of despotism, and the denouncer of the Jesuits. He belonged to the strong and valiant Opposition that, in the end, made the restored Bourbons remember and learn; and he was among

the lettered deputies who cleared the way for, and hailed, the Citizen King. It was when the King and the Charter had been accepted that he entered upon a career of unpopularity, which was unbroken to the day of his death. He elected to be with the counter-revolutionists. His ardour, as of old, was damaging to the cause he espoused. He was a stranger to discretion. His friends feared him more than his foes ; he over-stated his case ; his ambition vaulted comically ; his Pegasus looked like a dummy horse in a burlesque. In striking an heroic attitude, the unfortunate actor fell into the big drum. As deputy, in the time of Louis Philippe, he was with the party of Order, and called the Left the stipendiaries of revolt\*—a fair hit. But Viennet went on : “ I desire,” he declaimed with the grandest air,—“ I desire the repose of the state, because mine depends upon it.” This was to whet the edge and sharpen the point of a weapon for the use of his mortal foe. It is remembered of him to-day, while his bones are travelling to the Eastern Cemetery, with palm-embroidered *savants* in the rear, polishing their periods of praise as they go,—just as the light writer of 1868 scrapes up the “ *vieux niais* ” of 1834 to cast it after the old scholar’s bier. Which are the better gentlemen ?

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\* What would he have said of the “ *citoyens* ” who are drumming the *Rappel* to amuse Gavroche ?

M. Viennet was a servant of freedom, who remained beyond suspicion. He blundered, but he was faithful; he halted here and there, and would think for himself and in his own way, long after his ideas had become old-fashioned. He drew down the cheap jesters upon him; and the laughing old gentleman sat himself down to count the arrows which had hit him. But we who keep aloof from the unworthy contest in which the Boulevard witling, elbowing us and flicking his toothpick under our nose, jostles the bright, lettered gentleman of the old school, remorseless in regard to his age, and ungenerously forgetful of his youth;—we who stand apart, albeit aliens, should hold it a duty within the limit of our influence, to see justice done. Possibly, Viennet was as well known for his absurdities as for his merits. His poorest verses will live longest, it may be, because they have been unmercifully squibbed; but the fine-hearted, high-minded, humble, urbane veteran surely deserves something more than a Ferragus is likely to bestow upon his memory! Théophile Gautier may take the *fauteuil* he has left vacant: but he would be unworthy of his place if he should say a word in disparagement of his predecessor, whom he reviled unceremoniously enough in his life-time.

Perhaps it is British phlegm working in me when

I find myself blind to the charms of light criticism sprinkled over the writer who died yesterday. To-day, it appears to my stolid sense, is not the time for enlarging on the weak and wearying qualities of Jean Viennet. The satirist and deputy exhausted the patience of Louis Philippe when he got his royal master alone ; and the king begged his consort to draw off the prolix talker by engaging him in conversation. The anecdote is not worth much. Dished up artfully, however, it will raise a laugh at the expense of the father of the Academy, while the *immortelles* are being wreathed over his mortal part. An old prefect is supposed to tell the story. Viennet was enraptured with the attentions of Queen Amélie, and mistook them for the expressions of a tender passion. "What is the matter, Monsieur Viennet?" said a gentleman who found the author pacing the Tuileries Gardens sorrowfully. "Alas!" sighed the too tragic poet, glancing at the moon that smiles upon the palaces of kings as upon the cottages of the poor,—“Alas! I am very unfortunate!”—“You—who command every happiness!”—“There are happinesses which crush!”—“What do you mean?”—“I mean that in spite of me, without knowing it, I am about to make a division in the most august home in the kingdom.”—“How?”—“The Queen!” The poet ended with gesticulations of the most poignant grief. The King and Queen were informed of the Academician's

trouble, and laughed at it. The prefect who told the story to Ferragus a day or two since, in a tobacconist's shop, could never see stiff M. Viennet, carrying high his white head, without thinking of the amorous evening under the Tuileries balcony. He concludes by esteeming those happy who have nothing heavier than such *petits ridicules* upon their tombs. But why, before the cemetery mason has given the last touch of the trowel, hurry off to plump a disparaging story in the midst of the fresh *immortelles*?

The man *in extremis* furnishes copy. I find in the *Figaro*, "He confessed at the last moment: it was his final irony." The religious papers are besought not to be proud of these death-bed conversions. It is said, in an ancient canticle,

C'est faire une sacrifice  
Qui nous a peu coûté  
Que de quitter le vice  
Quand il nous a quitté.

It is remarked that the last line is bad: but the sentiment is "excellently just." Is it excellently placed in the funeral offerings to the memory of the father of the Academy? I would ask people to think of the effect such writing must have upon the young. Viennet's preface to his "*Franciade*," in which he speaks of his unrepresented tragedies and his unknown comedies, and finally, how he ended the sixth canto of his last epic with enthu-

siasm, undaunted by the jeers and sneers and neglect of his countrymen, is a most pathetic bit of writing. The man was true to himself at any rate. He was not of the monkey-proportions of the creatures—mostly dead and forgotten—who chattered at his heels, to degrade him. Deep in the man lay a serious purpose, which governed his life. His light was not dazzling, but he worked honestly according to it, throughout. And, with these hosts of comic gentlemen dancing through daily columns, it is refreshing to contemplate that which was respectable and gracious in the old school of French literary men. There is the scent of the midnight oil in a Viennet: in the writings of a Ferragus, a Wolff, a Lespès, a Marx, a Rochefort, I can detect—or think I can detect—*absinthe*. The abilities of these racy gentlemen it would be foolish to question; but I prefer the old manner. Let this choice be given—a life ranging between Torton's and Brébant's—and a life in the quiet of the Sorbonne. How many, in these times, and in this city, would cross the river to take up their quarters?

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#### PITILESS LITERATURE.

July, 1868.

THERE is, as I have remarked, a style of writing much in vogue just now—which I have called the

pitiless style. One or two French journalists may claim to be masters of it. Of late some good examples of it have come under my notice, and they are worth marking, because the style is not easily described. You must have a horrible incident—to begin with. Out of the Morgue much light literature has been made. A fanciful, passionless, touch-and-go cruelty animates the pitiless writer's page. He jests at scars. Disgrace, shabby or tragic, moves him to an exhibition of cultivated obduracy. He takes out his note-book over an open grave. I shall show him presently capering and running round a sick bed, to the delight of Gavroche. The *fosse commune* receiving the mortal coil of some disinherited greatness, is his field of the cloth of gold. You lift your cap; he keeps his upon his head, and shakes the bells that are fixed in it.

A stately procession is moving towards Père La chaise. The master of the black ceremonial is a dignitary indeed—who would despise the British undertaker, who looks like Death's butler ushering the coal-black wine to the coolness of mother earth. The great French *ordonnateur* is a lofty presence, with knightly sword girt to his hip, and with the pinch of his sable hat at a delicate angle above his Roman nose. At a distance he has a strong family likeness to Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. The funeral car follows on his stately way. Behind

are two uncovered friends ; and, still in the rear, “ in a first-class mourning-coach,” is Madame la Marquise, widow of the defunct. Flitting around is the man of the pitiless pen, for he has heavy business on to-day. Under the coffin-lid, upon which the mechanically-murmuring priest\* is sprinkling holy water (his eye fixed upon two more funerals winding up the steep), lies the mortal part of the Marquis d’Orvault ! The Marquis was a splendid subject, in the quick : but there is something which may be picked off his bones. To begin with, his sad history may be recapitulated, with fresh pitiless touches. The Marquise can be brought forward, for icy foolery. The Marquise—the cabman’s daughter ! the convict’s sister !—and with other surroundings and traditions which may be twisted into biting paragraphs and phrases,—is a figure of important proportions. She is susceptible of many literary amplifications. She drives home in the cab of Monsieur her father, to the palace of Monsieur the Marquis her husband. When her father does her the honour of a morning visit, he leaves his number instead of his card. The mother of the Marquise begging in the offices of a newspaper, offers a capital contrast. The

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\* The *Rappel* congratulates its readers on the increasing numbers of funerals, unaccompanied by any religious rite.



Marquise has her reception days, and so has Monsieur her brother, who is undergoing hard labour in prison. A daughter with a coat of arms, and a father with a coat provided by the Paris Cab Company, compose a picture agreeable to the vision of the pitiless. This first-class funeral is put in a parallel line with a cab-rank. Then the Marquis himself ! The whereabouts of the *maison mortuaire* ; the noble's peasant fare and lonely state, with some poor English creature true to the denuded man ; the disdain of splendid relatives at the bare idea of receiving his bones on his paternal acres ; the titter around the family circle at the mention of embalmment : these are notes for the cultivator of the pitiless style. Let the grave-digger cover up the old man's ashes ; and the *flâneur* will enjoy the story of ruin and disgrace and heartlessness and vice, all welded into a *feuilleton*, to-morrow evening. Where is the respect which good men feel for the sorely-laden ? Where is the pitying silence which befits a Christian crowd gazing upon culprits who are bent low with their chains ? Who is it that meets the condemned in the marketplace with jesting lips ? Is he the teacher ? Is the crowd to be taught that their hooting and yelling about the guillotine may be commended, and that laughter is the thing to get out of suffering ? The pitiless French literature, of which I have been a constant reader for some years past,

says this—that he whose business is amusement may gather the materials of his trade in the felon's cell and at the grave of disgrace. The clown is to grin through the widow's cap; the harlequin slaps the back of age with his bat, and shivers it over the busy grave-digger!

M. Charles Monselet is essentially an amusing writer. He is a renowned *fourchette* as well as a sparkling *feuilletonist*, who gathers his wit at table, and is critic of a cutlet. His fame as a writer being established, he moves whithersoever the public tend—humbly as the acrobat bears about his square of carpet. “*Scènes de la Vie Cruelle*” is now the title on his play-bill. One scene is a sample of the whole play.

A cold day; Carnival time; about nine in the morning. No snow—and none is necessary to deepen the spectator's emotion. A funeral from the Rue Jacob is on its way to the church of St. Germain-des-Près. Few followers—and for good reasons. It is an act of “enormous fatuity” to allow yourself to be buried too early in the morning. It is an imprudent defiance of human affection. I pass over the half-hour at church, and the religious service. These formalities are always alike. Somehow the hearse reached Montparnesse Cemetery. Is it needless to say that the few followers had become less on the road? Regrets, like other valuables, are regulated by weight and

measure. There are the dead whom you accompany only to the church-door ; doubtless this is as much trouble as they are worth. For other dead men, you consent to dip your fingers in the holy water, and to hear the priest to the end. After this you withdraw discreetly, and return to business.

There were then, on this occasion, only a dozen people in the cemetery. They stood before the open grave into which the body had been let down with ropes. At this moment an individual, who had been seen neither at the mortuary house nor at the church, pushed breathlessly to the front. His intentions were not misunderstood ; for he held a paper in his hand. The sexton paused to listen. The new individual was in the black coat and white cravat proper to the occasion ; but in the details of his costume a finer observer would have remarked a nicer and richer taste than is usual at a funeral. As his linen was embroidered with arabesques, so his trousers were moulded too elegantly to his limbs. His shoes were too thin for the season. On the other hand, he was in profound grief. He began :—  
“ Gentlemen, the remorseless grave is opened once more to receive a good and just man : I have named Paul-Polyeucte Baumevieuille, maker of alimentary substances, who received medals more than once. Many long years did I know him, and nobody had a better opportunity than I enjoyed, of estimating the excellent qualities of his heart.

Baumevielle—let us say this in his praise—rose from the lowest ranks of the people. It is then to himself alone, to his own rare perseverance, to his really superior intelligence, that he owed his splendid position—in the corn-market.” The orator paused to gain breath. It was then that the spectator remarked his pallor. The paper trembled in his hand. He continued in a hollow voice,—“Yea, gentlemen, Paul-Polyeucte Baumevielle had the right to call himself a self-made man. After a short time passed in a lawyer’s office—Maitre Harnincy’s, wherein the solid traditions of the old magistracy, of the Séguiers and the Espréménils, still lingered,—he threw himself wholly into the study of the productions of our soil. In him the citizen was on a level with the merchant. He promoted human progress equitably ; he knew how to avoid the foolish Utopias which are the curse of our country. Pioneer of the future, he was at the same time the soldier of order. Honours came unsolicited to Baumevielle. Appointed judge in the Commercial Chamber of the Seine, he discharged his imposing and delicate functions in a manner that gathered to him the general sympathy—the general—Baumevielle——” A second time the orator paused. Unquestionably he had overstrained himself. It was rather evident, when his costume was considered, that he had been up all night ; for it was that of a ball, and not of a

funeral. He made another effort, and continued, "Forgive me, gentlemen: grief suffocates me, and stifles my voice. And thou, Baumevieuille, thou, my respectable friend, disdain not the humble flowers I offer thee. I shall come often to thy grave, to learn near thy shade the great lessons of life, and to fortify myself anew in the austere delights of duty. Adieu, Mabeauvieuille, my poor friend—no—Baumevieuille. Adieu! Adieu!"

Giving way to his emotion, the orator dived into his pocket for his handkerchief. Then a strange spectacle was seen. He drew forth with his handkerchief an immense paste-board nose, with horse-hair moustache attached,—a nose at home only at an opera masked-ball. The nose fell into the grave, and rebounded with a hollow sound from the coffin. But it soon disappeared under the earth which the grave-diggers were casting over the mortal part of Baumevieuille. Go to Montparnasse Cemetery; follow the first alley on the left: a broken column is at the end of it. It is there Paul Polyeucte Baumevieuille, manufacturer of alimentary substances, and judge at the Tribunal of Commerce of the Seine, sleeps the eternal sleep—under the paste-board nose of his friend.

Grim comedy is this surely at the best! But it is plentiful on the Boulevards. We are hardly in the days of respect. The whole tendency of popular writing, reflecting and creating the pale,

sneering and wicked little swell of the Bois and the Boulevards, is *from* that reverence for serious and noble things, that deference for age, the chastity of mind that revolts at coarseness and cruelty in acting, speech or writing, which in duller days than these, wherein diamonds have risen so enormously, marked the lives of French gentlemen.

Francis Magnard quotes "a sinister *mot*" on the funeral of the Marquis d'Orvault: "The Marquise, *née* Schumacher, followed the procession in a mourning coach. The brother-in-law of the Marquis, young Schumacher, being *otherwise engaged*, could not take part in the ceremony." The brother-in-law is a convict undergoing punishment. "Pity's sleeping," and soundly.

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#### ROCHEFORT AND HIS "LANTERNE."

August, 1868.

AMONG the satirical writers of the Second Empire, Henri Rochefort, who does not date far back, has the sharpest and deepest sting. His weapon is cold and glittering. He is pitiless and plain-spoken. He conveys to his reader his own sense of enjoyment when he is using the scalping-knife. The mocker revels in phrases that degrade the diplomatic uniform to the footman's plush, and humble the princess to the *chiffonnière*. Hence his leadership

of the Gavroche party. He delights to pin a ridiculous something upon a man's coat ; to stab with a *mot* ; to strip artfully-clothed deeds and things, and discover the mean motive of that which the blind world has agreed to call a noble action. Before Lefébvre's *Femme couchée* in this year's *salon*—he makes his note with a steel point. Two words suffice—*plantureuse gaillarde* ! Get any poetry out of the work after this if you can. M. Rochefort only expresses daringly that which the French spectator has felt. No goddess reposes here—but a very woman ; yea, a *plantureuse gaillarde* ! When the word has passed, people *qui se respectent* begin to wonder why the artist should paint shamelessness. This is merely a general admission to the nude academy. Is the age only worthy to look upon the model ? Is the ideal dead and gone ; and have the degenerate sons of France turned their backs upon the goddess, to admire and court the *gaillarde* ? M. Lefébvre, in substance, says this in his picture, and M. Rochefort boldly interprets him in two words.

Henri Rochefort has taken a place of his own—a place apart—among his literary brethren, which is creditable to his power, and which proves that the French relish for the most spiteful writing is as keen as it ever was. The *Lanterne* is a little weekly book in a red cover, wholly written by Henri Rochefort, and extending to fifty-six pages. Roche-

fort understands his audience. He is alive to the great value of audacity, and opens by saying that, although he admits the public have very often shown him sympathy, the devil may take him if he knows why. Note the steady decline from the satire of poor despised Viennet and brave Béranger to the level of the *Rappel* at the close of 1869. The sympathy exists, however, and he was not inclined to cast it to the winds when, on one bitter winter's morning, he found himself turned out of the *Figaro* office, and left without a paper in which he could ventilate his little ideas on great men. He was at liberty still to sound the praises of M. Rouher's patriotic virtues and to dwell on the majestic personal proportions of M. Pinard ; but he must end here,—and praise was not the strong note in his voice.

Muzzle your savage dog, or short will be the days of the *Figaro*, said a warning voice from the Ministry of the Interior. Rochefort will not believe this ; but report has repeated the threat in many countries. Can he believe, he asks, that a minister would call an editor into his private room and say to him, “ You have a contributor who is distasteful to me. Get rid of him, or don't be surprised to find your paper meet a sudden death ; that's all ” ? We have now a parallel case ; a case that is penal according to the Code, articles 305 to 308. M. Rochefort wants to know how he would fare, should



he write to the Baron Rothschild this suggestive epistle :—" My dear Baron,—If to-night, between eight and nine o'clock, you have not deposited under the eleventh flag-stone on the left, in the Rue Laffitte, coming from the Boulevard, the sum of 55,000 francs, in good bank notes, you will find your house, your treasure, and yourself a heap of ruins." Yet he and the minister, he conceives, in his own mischievous way, would be in the same boat. They would have both offended against the above-quoted articles of the Code. Therefore he will not give a moment's attention to the current rumours, or, as a good citizen, he would feel bound to prosecute the suspected criminal,—provided he could obtain the authority of the Council of State, who invariably vote *for* the Government with a touching unanimity which brings tears into the eyes of the tender-hearted.

Being left out in the cold, and refusing to believe for a moment the odious rumours spread to the disadvantage of the minister, Rochefort bought a sheet of official paper, and wrote to him—taking care to sweeten every line with compliments and to adopt a servile tone—requesting that his Excellency would permit him to establish a political organ of his own. He did not forget, at the same time, to inform his comrades of his proceeding. He was instantly overpowered with their sympathy, and made a martyr before return of post. The new law on the press

passed—and thus the road to publicity was free to him—with the advertisement of martyrdom to help him in his career as editor. He risked the danger of the minister's favour, but, happily, escaped it. Rochefort, on good terms with the "powers that be," would have lost half the circulation which Rochefort the martyr obtains. He played the same graceless part, when he was admitted within the French frontier, to pursue his candidature. According to his own view of the predicament, the fatal word "spy" would have been hissed against him. "Now you know," he says familiarly to his reader, "that once called a spy, a man who should mount the scaffold for his opinions would never regain the confidence of the public. People would be at hand to affirm that they saw the executioner, while binding him to the fatal plank, slip his last quarter's wages into his hands." The satirist, when he had posted his letter to the minister, felt a cold perspiration steal over him, and mortal fear possessed him. He was less prudent—and he knew it—than the gentleman who had never made a proposal of marriage to a lady, lest he should be accepted. He soliloquized—"If the minister is as intelligent as his friends describe him, I am lost! He will say 'Yes.' He has only to add in his answer that he will send the *Lanterne* the Government advertisements, and nothing will remain for me but to blow my brains out." Happily, the

minister did not prove so intelligent as his friends described him :—and Henri Rochefort was saved.

The *Lanterne* is free from suspicion, and is hung up, with every advantage arising from unquestionable official hate, at Henri Rochefort's gate, the proprietor laughing the while, at the minister. The new law gives M. Rochefort the liberty to publish his little weekly book, on payment of a *sou* stamp on every copy. He notes the alteration of the law, and says the Government have sold him the right to say all his disagreeable things about them, at the rate of five centimes a paper. The money calculation is a good one, since the more violent Rochefort becomes in opposition, the more his *Lanterne* will sell, and the more the traduced Government will gain.

The journalist observes to the minister, "Sir, I have a burning desire to call you a leper, a calf with two heads, in public. How much will these epithets cost me ?"—"Last year they would have cost you thirty francs a day. But I have reduced my prices a little : the amount will be twenty-five francs only."—"Very well, sir ; here are your twenty-five francs, and I'm off to drag you through the mud." The five-centime stamp, and a deposit of 1400*l.* caution money, represent Rochefort's pecuniary relations with the Government. So much for the foundation of a little opposition satirical journal.

It must be confessed that the editor and sole

writer—the one light in the *Lanterne*—takes his money's worth. He is obliged to keep his pen off the *Senate* and the *Corps Législatif*, and whimsically proves that these august bodies have no existence ; but a broad range is left to him.

His review opens with the case of Archbishop de Bonnechose, who has fallen foul of Doctor See ; and the lightning of whose eloquence struck, it seems, a child playing in the Luxembourg Gardens, and, remarkable effect of clerical lightning, changed the little creature into a green lizard ! The orator launches so many anathemas at the materialists in his three hours' speech, that the very same night all the anathema-dealers retire from business with 15,000 francs a year each. On the morrow the Archbishop learns that Dr. See has not used the words which provoked his magnificent harangue—and nothing remains but an apology ! The anathema-dealers are happy : but what about the green lizard in the Luxembourg Gardens ? A country is fortunate indeed in which all this happens. A legislator makes a noble oration on the cultivation of the beet-root, and at its close is informed that the potato is the subject under discussion. Well, well ; the Cardinal played the game splendidly—but it was a mis-deal. Mis-deals are not rare in the Senate. Colonel Lopez was deprived of his riband of the Legion for having betrayed Maximilian, and afterwards it was dis-

covered that the Emperor was not given over to his enemies in his sleep by the Colonel, but that he was taken at the head of a regiment. Still the Senate could not possibly withdraw its generous indignation, and hand back the bauble to the outraged Colonel. The scene would have been too comic even for the Luxembourg Palace. Lopez remains degraded, therefore, by mistake : and Rochefort has heard that since he has been disgraced by the Imperial Senate of France, he is fattening out and flourishing. One amusing scene recalls another. When the Army Bill was before the enthusiastic Senators, a hot patriot exclaimed —“ Where is the French girl who would give her hand to the man who had refused to enter the Garde Nationale Mobile ? ” With one accord the senators cried that no such depraved creature existed. Delightful simplicity of imperial patrons ! Should a millionaire enter a dressmaker’s shop to ask the hand of one of the apprentices, the sweet child—putting aside her own interests and the charming perspective of a *victoria* with two horses—would reply, “ Sir, do you belong to the Garde Nationale Mobile ? ” Should the millionaire answer, “ No, I do not ; I pay my *frotteur* six francs a month to look after our frontiers in my place,”—be *quite* sure that the sweet child would then say, “ Leave, Sir ; we can never be united. I prefer cutting snips all my life to becoming the

wife of a man who is not in the Garde National Mobile."

Rochefort conjures the enthusiastic senators to be candid. When loves of girls of sweet seventeen give their hands to bedridden Methuselahs for the sole advantage of going to see the *Grand Prix* run in a chariot emblazoned with armorial bearings, can it be reasonably held that no man has the most distant hope of marriage who does not belong to the Garde Nationale Mobile? He asks their Greatnesses, do they take Frenchmen to be, in the aggregate, fools? They may be right or wrong; he respectfully puts the simple question. But he can see distinctly that posterity is clearing its throat to laugh at them.

Rochefort's preliminary political reflections are summed up; and his way is smooth to deal with everything he may find noteworthy in the papers, week after week. He promises little or no news; but a commentary on the week's events that may have moved his amiable pen. He will wing his erratic flight from flower to flower, and never once forget his sting. You will not find him pestering you with "divers facts" about a lady who has lost her purse in an omnibus; but he will be glad to receive authentic scandals. When your mistress deceives you, write to Rochefort. When the society in which your savings are invested is dissipating the capital in scandalous waste, turn

your woes into the ear of the man who holds the *Lanterne*. He will be public consoler of real griefs. He will redress your private wrongs by printing off the account of them by thousands of copies. If this is not cheap and speedy consolation, what is ?

Rochefort disdains a plan. He is a sharp-shooter, not a general. He hits wide of the mark occasionally. For instance, he observes that the convict Barrett, after two reprieves, was hanged on the anniversary of Queen Victoria's birthday ! Fireworks replaced by a hanging ! he exclaims ; inferring that the two reprieves were designed to bring down the day of execution to the most popular of English holidays. He likens the plan to that of King Theodore, who celebrated his birthday by decapitating prisoners with his own hand. Rochefort is no friend of this country. It is not easy to find out who is his friend, or for whom he has a generous shake of the hand.

His appearance with his *Lanterne* shows no kindly light on the British side of the Channel. Friendliness blunts his style—and to him the style is the man. He must first be brilliant—he will see whether he can be just afterwards : generous he can never be. The thrusts at foes—and at persons who are neither foes nor friends—are so coldly given, that you know a steady eye is watching for the wound. The blood provokes a smile. It is cruel sport. It bears that relation to the best satire

which cockroach spinning bears to trout fishing. We may be content to think that the juxtaposition of Napoleon the Third and Theodore of Abyssinia, even sharply arranged and spiced, would not amuse us. In 1869 the comparison is between Napoleon the Third and our Saviour! We love the satire that is just. The sword must be in noble hands to be welcome in the sight of Englishmen. A weekly sneer reaching from the Madeleine to the Bastille, and comprehending all authorities and presences, will succeed in Paris—if M. Rochefort be not answered by a policeman. The thing would not find its way into every library in this country.

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THE “LANTERNE” DARKENED.

August, 1868.

THE cloud that has overspread the wordrous fortunes of M. Henri Rochefort has darkened the Boulevards, cast gloom in the cafés, and discontent everywhere. The *Lanterne* had become a fashionable weekly amusement. The Emperor's own friends looked forward eagerly to the new number. It contained the bitterest satirical writing of the time; and the French love a biting style, a hard blow, and the play of a wild, audacious fancy. It was equivalent to a weekly fencing lesson; and each week the intrepid and polished master displayed a new grace and a stronger wrist. I would not maintain



for a moment that half the play was fair ; that the satire was usually in good taste ; that charges were not insinuated which were incapable of proof. The satirist did not behave towards his antagonist *en galant homme*. Everything was set down in malice. By the light of the *Lanterne*, imperial institutions and Imperialists looked so much moving rottenness. A wise man has said that in any controversy, the instant we feel angry we have already ceased striving for truth, and begun striving for ourselves.

Rocheftort does not show his anger. As I have before remarked, coldness is a main part of his force. But he contrives to convey to his reader a sense of the deep-rooted, bitter hate which is in his soul. If I had to select his type in the Zoological Gardens, I should point to the polar bear, and not to the tiger of the tropics. He is rage and hate—in ice. The flame is there, under the frozen sentences. His metal blisters by its frigidity, and not by its heat. The running readers of these very rapid times, never pause to ask themselves whether the satirist has not left truth on the lee, and taken to a free fight for his own purposes ; because he has had the cunning to bank up his fires—with snow.

The outwardly cold man is the deeper hater. He impresses weaker folk, who are not able to contain their heat. Rocheftort's success has been nearly all gained by the power he has shown of ripping open his foe without changing a muscle, or

soiling his sleeve. He cuts up the empire pleasantly, as a nurse divides a holiday cake in a nursery. All his readers make wry faces over the nastiness his polished blade lays bare ; only he remains outwardly unimpressed by the impurity. A man so constituted—the kernel a very Gaul, the shell a Dutchman—is a fresh presence, an original and fascinating form of literary power. Dry wit is as engaging as dry humour. The jester who can command his own face is king of his company. Rochefort appears to be having a light touch-and-go conversation with a gentleman of a different way of thinking ; and, suddenly, he plunges a thin long knife into his bowels—that is all,—and quietly turns aside to run his critical thumb along a fresh blade !

So much for Rochefort's manner of proceeding. The originality of the power used to make, in a few weeks, one of the most astonishing journalistic successes of our epoch, is beyond dispute. Rochefort is unlike any other French writer of his time. He understands the science of giving,—which consists in conveying the idea that an enormous reserve fund is always on hand. People exclaim—" If Rochefort were to hit his hardest ! " They believe that if he chose to insert the nib of his pen under the corner-stone of the Louvre, the building would topple. Rochefort was becoming a popular idol ; for the people love strength. But

“What is strength without a double share of wisdom?” The *Lanterne* is darkened; the trimmer of the light is condemned to prison. People must hie away to Belgium for that which was to be had by the thousand in the Rue Coq-Héron. The French edition has been carried off in hand-barrows to the Prefecture of Police. The satirist has had a fight with the printer of an opposition satirical publication, and is under sentence. M. de Villermessart has been attacked. Another journalist has been beaten by an angry sailor. There is an odour of gunpowder in the printing-offices. Roche’ort’s opponents got away from the Halls of Justice armed with revolvers. Satire, pistols, sticks, and swords are jumbled together. Now, the name of a writer’s infant is not safe from a blow, as M. Dumas Fils can testify. The petty satirists have sprung up in the wake of the lantern-bearer. The wit is answered with foul words; a faultless Toledo glitters against the walls in the Rue Coq-Héron; and in the dismal literary byways hang bludgeons and the bravo’s weapon. In this chaos a figure is set up as a rallying-post. Liberty is the end and aim, first, of the lantern-bearer, and then of the crew who cover him with mud, and believe they answer, when they maltreat him. We shall see the satirist turn upon them and have a feast of vengeance presently. The sweet goddess whom our neighbours have served so fantastically for many years past, cannot

be very proud of the men who defend her, under official protection, with ignoble weapons; nor, on the other hand, can she see in the unsparing critic who will mince the beard of his foe, and pulverize his little finger, a very trusty knight. It must end badly.

M. Henri Rochefort is opposed to the dynasty of Napoleon. He detests Imperial institutions. He would pluck the eagles from the standard of France, and set the Bourbon lily floating over the Tuileries. In December, 1869, the lilies fared no better than the bees. In estimating his work and the Government response to him, his standpoint should be kept distinctly in view. He starts with a Pretender in his eye; his manner of proceeding is sweeping: he recommends that which he desires, by picking to pieces and vilifying that which exists. He conveys to you an idea that the Bonapartists are corrupt in every part. There is not an Imperial postboy who is not a rascal. All who are not knaves are fools. Unkind fate has handed France over to the Bonaparte to be sacked. All this is conveyed in points glittering as icicles in the morning sun.

The *Lanterne* was lit, I may repeat, to show that all was rotten in Imperial France. The mistake, regarding the satirical journal as a means to an end, was in the wholesale nature of the slaughter. A violent over-statement may amuse when put in witty dressings, but it will engender suspicion, and will

never carry conviction. It is quite debatable whether the snuffed-out *Lanterne* has not done harm instead of good to the cause of the Opposition. On the other hand, can any rational creature imagine for a moment, that the Imperial cause is served by the Marchals, or by driving outraged French writers to seek justice in Brussels? In the *Inflexible*—a resolutely unscrupulous paper that is not prohibited while the *Lanterne* is—M. Henri Rochefort's satires against the Imperial Government were answered with the insinuation that he was a twice-convicted swindler, who on this account had been refused permission to wear a foreign decoration! Again, the *Figaro*, in demonstrating that the honour of M. Rochefort is without stain, shows by the official criminal reports of France that Marchal's is not. Charming amenities, that make the blood dance in the veins of Gavroche! The tribunals have enough to do. The public is kept in a state of chronic perturbation. Lullier, who struck M. Paul de Cassagnac, is before the Correctional Police for assault, and for having illegally worn a military uniform! M. Rochefort has won damages which his defamers cannot pay, and for which they are not liable to imprisonment; while he is condemned to durance vile for having struck the printer! He runs away, to return chief of the Gavroche party. Albert Wolff, who has not been able to punish Stanier and Marchal in his own country, is pursuing

them, with brighter hopes, in Brussels. Here is a mighty confusion of Official and Opposition satirists ! Henri Rochefort stands out among the combatants as the most polished and the most brilliant. He is as far removed from a Marchal or a Stanier as a crusader is above a bravo ;—and Rochefort is no hero. The Opposition show a front in which there is not, as yet, a disgraced soldier ; but the ranks of the satirists, inspired from the Prefecture, exhibit company on passing which honest men hold their noses, and hasten forward.

The Opposition appeal to the Minister of the Interior to withdraw his official calumniators, or the calumniators who fly at the throats of honourable citizens, from under the wing of the Prefecture. Ferragus says : “ What is the use of a police that betrays itself by its scent and aspect ? You want more ingenious spies—subtler agents.” But Ferragus will not believe that writers so base can be Government instruments, and he calls upon the Minister to repudiate them. It seems impossible, indeed, to put out the *Lanterne* of Rochefort, and leave the *Inflexible* of Marchal (a thing too bad for a French printer to touch) a free circulation across the Belgian frontier.

The man of genius, whose coldly glittering wit has brightened over France, is silenced ; his calumniators, convicted of falsehood and of slander, remain upstanding and free to attack a fettered

enemy. This is the situation. I am not prepared to say that Rochefort is a just—and he certainly is not a generous—satirist. He served his cause poorly, because he was unfair and ungenerous. But his life was beyond reproach. His conscience, he loudly says, was in his work. He was a foe worthy of the finest steel. His rashness and wide thrusts laid him open to attack from men on his own level.

You find a knight armed with a true weapon, in the lists; and you permit varlets to squirt abominations in his eyes, and then bind him and thrust him from the field! What says the lady with the pensive eyes, sitting at her balcony? Can the gallant knight who made a proud figure at the Eglintoun tournament many years ago, and is Cæsar now, have marked the game?

Yea, he has marked it!

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### THE “CLOCHE” OF FERRAGUS.

August, 1868.

THE success and prosecution of Henri Rochefort, together with the imitators and opponents who have been brought into the field, are already working to an end. The *Lanterne* has not been put out, but the satirist's light has been thrust under a bushel. The seizure of the little red book from people's hands in the public streets, the ebullition by the Sorbonne, the bearing about of a lantern in chains,

the condemnation of the unscrupulous editor to a fine of ten thousand francs and one year's imprisonment, and finally, the appearance of Ferragus with his *Cloche*, have brought the excitement to a crisis. The wonder has reached its tenth day. People are recovering from a passion, and are consenting to be just. Edmond About, writing in the *Gaulois*, says that the seizure of the *Lanterne* could not astonish any rational creature. From the discussion of abuses, the writer had degraded his page to outrages on persons. Party men may excuse attacks upon women, especially when they stand in "the fierce light that beats about a throne," but a nation is more generous; and the National Guard's ovation to the Empress was the answer of the impartial public to M. Rochefort's satire. M. Rochefort ran wild in his astonishment at the liberty which was given him. They who are guilty of licence are the Autocrat's best friends; they justify his chains. The effect of the *Lanterne*, and of the airs which its editor has been giving himself from Brussels, is to make crowds of prudent citizens ask for a strong law and a firm Government. The first fruits of the liberty in journalism which has been given are as bad as they could well be. Rotten eggs have risen in the market. M. About tells the French public that the numbers of the *Lanterne* sold, produced a profit of 12,000*l.*, which was divided among three or four persons. He would have none imprisoned who



have done this prosperous trade in licentious satire, but he would empty their pockets. He urges the Government to leave thought free, and not to withdraw the liberties recently given; at the same time, he has the courage to denounce the party men who can even sow hatred in the breast of a boy at a distribution of school prizes, and lead him to commit a public outrage against the most liberal Minister who has held a portfolio under the Second Empire.\* The result of violence, of blind hatred, of untrue statements, of slanders,—all concentrated against a Government, as the immediate consequence of the liberty it has given,—is a strong revulsion in favour of that Government. The misuse of satire has stirred the depths of society, and quickened the most odious forms of slander and vituperation. The public is stirred—but towards a reaction that shows how much the French masses have improved of late years. Silence the slanderers, punish the preachers of sedition, is the advice of About and other friends of freedom; but keep the tree of Liberty where you have planted it. Nourish it conscientiously; at the same time, guard it against the bad citizens who would hatch disorder, to their own profit, under its shelter.

People of all shades of opinion are rejoiced at the result of the Wolff trial at Brussels—viz., the con-

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\* M. Duruy.

demnation of the printer of the *Inflexible* to pay ten thousand francs damages ; because the *Inflexible* is a paper *de bas étage*. Its method and tone of criticism could serve no just cause ; its existence, with a crowd of contemporaries of its kidney, could be of service only to the enemies of liberty—to those whom it attacked. The *Lanterne* is, I need not repeat, a journal removed—as the *Cloche* is—far above the *Inflexible* ; but all are excuses for a recurrence to repressive laws, and therefore are presences in French journalism which the friends of free speaking and free printing should not encourage. The first number of the *Cloche* contains, according to the *Gaulois*, a dominant note of most exasperating import. “Lately the public might read upon one of the gates of the Tuileries, where building was going forward, ‘The public is not admitted.’ A workman who was passing shrugged his shoulders, picked up a lump of chalk, and added to the inscription, ‘But if!’” The *Gaulois* cries, “A little more nerve, old ringer !” Suppose—I say *suppose*—this kind of satire were set up in London, and were to be applied to Buckingham Palace—what cause would it serve ? Writers who use these weapons are blunderers, or something worse. If mere blunderers, they are as children into whose hands fire-arms have suddenly fallen. It is their friends who are in danger.

## THE JOURNALISM OF 1848 AND 1869.

October, 1868.

THE new press law has quickened the literary energies of French journalists. When we got rid of the stamp and advertisement duties in England, it was predicted that very soon every English journalist would be "grinding his own organ"; but we have not proved so adventurous or prolific. Capital does not flow into printing offices so copiously in England as the golden stream tends to the printing presses of France. The number of literary ventures for which M. Henri Rochefort is responsible will make a curious page in the future history of French journalism. The fantastic, punning titles exhibit the malice of the national character: as those of the revolutions discovered at once its grimness and irreverence. I repeat, the windows are full of the little lights which the unfortunate *Lanterne* has provoked; but the rate of production (albeit three or four newspapers are announced every week) is far below that of a week in 1848. Then, Paris was wrapped in paper. The over-sanguine English provincial printer who based his calculations of profit on the assumption that every man, woman, and child in his native town would take two copies (a circulation that would just cover expenses), was not more confident about the literary capacity of his public, than every Paris printer showed himself after

the dethronement of Louis Philippe. The paper and print excitement which is abroad at this moment is warm enough ; but how far is it from the fecundity of seven days of revolution !

The last week in the month of May, 1848, produced the following new publications in Paris :—the *Archives du Peuple*, *L'Aigle Républicain*, *Le Petit Caporal*, *La Redingote Grise*, *Le Petit Fils du Père Duchêne*, *La France Nouvelle* (by Alexandre Dumas), *Les Débats de l'Assemblée Nationale*, *La Constitution*, *La République Napoléonienne*, *Le Bonnet Rouge*, *La Colère du Vieux Républicain*, *Le Volcan*, *Les Saltimbanques*, *Jacques Bonhomme*, *L'Organisation du Travail*, *Le Christ Républicain*, by the *Citoyenne Sans-peur*, *Le Lampion*, *Le Robespierre*, *Le Napoléonien*, *Le Bonapartiste*, *L'Epoque*, *Le Diable Rose*, *La République des Femmes*, *Le Journal des Cotillons*, *La Garde Mobile*, and *Le Tocsin des Travailleurs*. The list shows the way the wind was blowing ; and if we were to make out a complete statement of the Lanterns and Clocks which have appeared of late within the fortifications, we might get together a little list of publications boding evil to the Imperial Government. In 1848 the Bonapartists were active and the blasphemer was not idle. The *Redingote Grise* did not do much towards the cause of Louis Napoleon ; but it was one of the long array of obscure, cheap, Bonapartist prints that were filtered through the by-ways, and made a public opinion

suit to the Prince's purpose. By persevering little blows, prodigious effects are produced. A man with a hammer drives home hot bolts that will collectively support endless successions of express trains. Nay, all the movements of importance which have been made here, have been got about by scores of little journals. When I want to see whither the *blouse* mind is tending, I leave the Boulevards and turn into the side streets of the Marais and the Quartier St.-Antoine. In the petty print and newspaper shops you read the will and aspirations of the *prolétaire*; and I find my interpreter of the bourgeois at the kiosk of the pretty newsvendor on the Boulevard des Capucines. The journalistic activity is prodigious both for the bourgeois and the workman. On one morning I see two new papers announced. M. de La Ponterie, an old contributor to *La France*, and now of *La Presse*, is to establish a new daily paper, with a capital of 26,000*l.* Havre is determined on a new daily organ, of very liberal proclivities, and has banked 16,000*l.* to begin with. No less than 42,000*l.* embarked in journalism in one week! Is all this activity and risk of capital ominous—as the *Redingote Grise*, and the *République Napoléonienne* were ominous in 1848?

There is a wide difference between the two activities. In 1848 there were two broadly-marked parties at work. The *Bonnet Rouge* was shaking defiantly

before the *Petit Caporal* ; *Le Robespierre* was fighting *Le Bonapartiste* ; *Le Tocsin des Travailleurs* was sounding in the ears of *La Constitution*. The two separate armies were plain in sight ; and they fought a distinct battle. The eagle plucked the *bonnet rouge* from the republican head ; and the vanquished hosts turned back into their workshops. But to-day you can perceive no line of battle. Discontent has taken many fantastic forms. The Opposition is mighty in numbers, but it is a mob without a flag or a name. There are many would-be leaders : the pretenders may be counted on both hands. But an organ to be called *Monsieur Chose* would not last a week. *Le Parapluie de Monsieur Smith* would be an amusing title ; but only a few old *bourgeois* would rally round the stick. I am looking at this from a strictly literary point of view. Father Bugeaud's cap is among the old clothes of the army—as forgotten as the last year's red breeches of a Zouave. The republican flag is more *en évidence* than any other pretension to rule Frenchmen, but it rocks in the storm of the passions and quarrels which encompass it. Its friends, who are above suspicion, are doubtful ; its lip-adorers are a host. The mass cannot believe in the sound foundation of the republican principle, since they have seen it spread thrice only as concrete for a new throne. That which is most evident is, that there are crowds of servants of the monarchical pretenders

who are willing to drive the State to revolution, and so on through the disasters of an incoherent republic, back to the lily, or the Charter of July.

Hence the number of opposition prints which preach republicanism. But the crown and sceptre lie under their cap of liberty. In presence of the Spanish revolution, they disagree even as to the first process for the establishment of a new constitution.

The little affair is settled, in M. de Girardin's organ, in a few paragraphs; but then the author of *Le Droit* would reconstruct the Milky Way any morning before breakfast, and find a moment for the re-adjustment of the map of Europe, into the bargain. The *Gaulois* welcomes Napoleon back to his capital, just advising him to be mindful of the example of Spain, and bring a few liberal reforms in his pocket. The pretty newsvendor by the Grand Hôtel finds the evening papers almost torn out of her kiosk; but, albeit they are chiefly Opposition organs, it is impossible to gather from them significant signs like those which were in the journalism of 1848. And in this a mighty advance in French public opinion may be descried. There are partisans of exiled royal families within the fortifications still, but there are no strong pretenders' parties. Groups of royalists in republican cloaks are about, and, as the Americans have it,

“bobbing around”; but the people appear to have lived out of the necessity of special kingship, and to clamour for reforms to be granted by the sovereign they have. Herein we perceive one of the effects of our English example. It has been said again and again that free journalism would prosper and become solid in France if journalists would give up the service of pretenders, and direct their opposition against bad laws, and not against one dynasty for the benefit of another.

While the little press is taking extraordinary, and in some cases detestable, forms; the great press is, in the main, opposing steadily and loyally all the shortcomings of the actual *régime*—pegging away, in old Abe Lincoln’s fashion, at the hard bits of despotism which deface their country. The recent contention among the printers for the production of the *Moniteur* is an event which confirms the impression of impartial observers, that journalism is consolidating itself for permanent freedom. M. Wittersheim, who is bound by his contract to distribute 95,000 copies of the little *Moniteur* gratuitously, at a cost of more than 30,000*l.* per annum, has deposited a guarantee of 8,000*l.* with the Minister of State. This gentleman, at any rate, has some faith in the peaceful solution of the difficulties between the Imperial Government and the Opposition.

The sovereign people were in the Tuileries—



unbidden guests in Louis Philippe's wine cellars ! A curious observer was hastening to contemplate the scene. He was stopped at the gates by some sorry-looking rascals on guard. The leader said menacingly, " Your cockade, citizen ; where is your cockade ? "

The man without the colour was surrounded at once by an unsavoury rabble. He was equal to the occasion. Lifting his hat, he steadily and minutely examined it ; then exclaimed—" It's most perplexing, most unaccountable,—I must have left it in my night-cap."

Men are not bound to wear colours now. A writer may pass without a prince's livery ; and that which is most hopeful in the present condition of journalistic affairs is, that the devotion of a cockade in a night-cap could not reach a high place. The friends of the Government attack its reactionary measures. The ministry is getting under criticism ; the prolétaires are liberal, but neither Republican, Orleanist, nor Legitimist. *La Charrue*, *Le Pirate*, *Le Coq-à-l'Ane*, *L'Eteignoir*, *La Lanterne Magique*, are whimsical, poisonous offshoots of M. Rochefort's transported *Lanterne*.

He who would study the altered and improved state of public opinion in France, should buy these petty papers and pamphlets, and a host more, in the Passages du Havre or Jouffroy.

There is an opposition, fierce and uncompro-

missing, in the journals cheap and dear ; but it is, in the main, His Majesty's Opposition. The fire-brands are in sore need of fuel.

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## THE DAYS OF JUNE, 1869.

June, 1869.

I WAS up betimes yesterday, having a journey of some fifty miles to make before ten o'clock. The servant showed much excitement over the breakfast preparations, and I heard loud talking in the kitchen about the *Rappel*. With my coffee, Célestine brought me the information that "we were going to have war again." War ! war with whom ? where ? Why, Monsieur would be good enough to remember that the husband of the *crémère* was a *sergent de ville*. Last night he was called on duty at nine o'clock ; and he had been on duty all night long. Terrible things had taken place. It was beginning just as the troubles of 1848 began ; when the blood flowed along the gutters. Those journalists did not know what they wanted. Our milk-woman was certain of it, and being the wife of a *sergent de ville*, she ought to know. Célestine was hereupon very voluble and picturesque in her denunciations of the *canaille* (having spent her palmy days of service in the household of a Count) ; and it would have gone ill (Célestine being gifted

with a very persuasive quantity of muscle) with any individuals of that class, participators in the window-breaking, or kiosk destruction, who had come within her reach yesterday morning. Although at the beginning of A in her elementary course of philosophy, Célestine was good enough to explain to me that she ventured to say no good ever came of breaking other people's windows; and that as for the demolition of the poor women's kiosks, every man present at such an outrage deserved to be sent to reflect on it in prison;—and nobody would pity him. “What do they want, the fools?”—Célestine exclaimed, waxing very hot, with the remembrance of the *crêmière's* narrative—“crying and singing about the streets when they ought to be in bed, resting for to-morrow's work? A pretty business they made of it before, when they ruined nearly all of us. No work done, and everybody king.” If you want to know where the party of reaction is to be found, search the kitchens of Paris. The saving, hard-working citizens who keep clear of the wine-shops, and patiently hoard their francs sou by sou, if they could be banded to-morrow as a city police, would fall upon the brawlers and madcaps of the Boulevards, and make short work of them. The *coup* in the cabaret makes the blow in the street. The knife and fork would dispose of the Gavroche party in a trice.

I went forth on my journey, and never did great

city look quieter than Paris in the early summer light. At Batignolles I came upon blouses (masons) by the score, smoking their black pipes, chattering and playing practical jokes, as their wont is, outside the various wine-shops. They were having the morning *coup*, and it was loosening "the jesses of the tongue." Happier fellows I never saw bearing the fardel of life. Were any of these at the window-breaking or the kiosk demolitions? If yea, they were simply lovers of mischief, improving the occasion; as the crowds were lovers of a sight, determined to be gratified. I had an invitation in my pocket: "Come this evening; dine at seven; and after that go to Brébant's, to see the fun." At the railway-station there was a little excitement before the newspaper-stall. The eagerness to get news of the scenes on the Boulevards and the Place de la Bastille was noticeable; and in the waiting-room men's eyes were riveted on the *Siècle* and the *Débats*. In my railway carriage two well-to-do citizens discussed the details which they were reading. "It's just like us," said No. 1, "it's the Parisian all over. He is *badaud* to the marrow of his bones. He is the most curious specimen of the human race. No danger will deter him. Something to see, the most stupid and trifling, and *pan!* he dives his hands into his pockets and keeps his nose in the air; nor will he move it many inches after it has been

scratched by the bayonet of a Municipal Guard.” “True; it is only too true,” No. 2 answered. “But the police have been stupid—stupid as geese. They should have been kept in the background. When there were nearly 20,000 people shouting and singing outside the Sorbonne no police demonstration was made—and pray, was the Quarter sacked?”

“You are good, my dear fellow. And pray, are the elections over, or are they not? While the elections were on, granted, the people had a right to meet and make a little *tapage*. *Tapage* is salt to some Frenchmen, and to a great many. But (and here No. 1 majestically folded his arms and pointed the elbows with jerks towards his friend), but is this to continue always? Am I to be permitted to go to my business in quiet, or am I not? Am I to be allowed to drink my *choppe* on the Boulevard des Italiens in the cool of the evening; or am I to be driven down the Rue Richelieu at the point of a Municipal’s bayonet, because a couple of hundred vagabonds, who choose to call me Citizen instead of Monsieur, will not keep quiet, and will shout Rochefort’s name and break windows? Is my liberty to be respected first, or theirs?” No. 2 now protested that he was not on the side of the *canaille*, but that he was convinced the police had shown *trop de zèle*. This roused No. 1 again:—*Trop de zèle!* That’s magnificent.

What! when the mob were scattering peaceable persons, and hooting, and stone-throwing, and threatening pillage, the police were to fold their arms and bow to these little gambols of a sovereign people! *Trop de zèle!* Do you think a *sergent de ville* likes to risk having his face cut to pieces by a set of blackguards, more than any other person? *Allons!* it's monstrous, and you shouldn't try to defend it. It is indefensible. There are times when every weapon is a good one; but not now. We have got our victory; Paris has spoken her will; that is enough. All beyond is puerile or criminal violence. I and you are too old, as Girardin says, to serve another apprenticeship. Let us work with the materials we have."

No. 2 shrugged his shoulders, and gave himself the airs of a man who had a crushing reply, but was not disposed to use it, in pity for the weakness of his opponent.

In a little country town, where I breakfasted with two or three local notabilities, the *émeutes* furnished the conversation. The guests were not Bonapartists; they were all Liberals,—at least, all who took part in the discussion, which was so animated that the landlady thought the gentlemen would never get through the *hors-d'œuvre* of crisp artichokes *à l'huile* with which she had gladdened them. But throughout, an old, most emphatic, and commanding gentleman sounded regularly, in

the lulls:—"What I say is, that it is not logical. We have got universal suffrage; we have all voted; some deputies whom I detest, have been returned;—but I am bound, we are all bound, to respect the verdict of the majority. To rush into the street, after you have recorded your vote under universal suffrage, is illogical, ignoble; but above all, and before all, it is illogical. Can you go beyond universal suffrage? We have the strongest weapon we can have in our hand; and instead of using it like rational men, we are breaking it to pieces, as a bad child breaks its toy." After breakfast, the old man went away to his business, through the ancient kitchen of the hotel, neglecting, in his excitement, to notice the *chef* who capped to him; and still repeating, brandishing his arms,—“It’s illogical, and therefore ridiculous. With universal suffrage, I repeat, it’s illogical.”

Back to Paris in the afternoon. I found the Boulevards crowded, not with insurgents, but with well-dressed hosts; and an Imperial carriage slowly pushing its way through, amid cheers and waving of hats. “Well done! Well done!” the people shouted. “This is brave! This is a happy thought!” And Cæsar, giving the silver edge of a smile to the black cloud of his thoughts—and the gentle, charitable woman beside him, who graces his life with the hundred kindnesses she scatters far and wide, bowing and repeating audibly,

“Merci, Messieurs,” to the enthusiastic subjects at her wheels—pass on in a whirlwind, the equerry imploring the crowd to keep clear, or they will be crushed to death. This amid the broken lamps and kiosks of last night!

And in the evening, the night before and to-day, are reviewed over the coffee. The opinions are of the most perplexing kind.

The movement is graver than we imagine. Behind the mischievous window-breaking lies and moves the party of Gavroche! We must make no mistake about this. Somebody’s money pays for it. It is in this way that revolutions have always begun. The people are merry over it now, and the crowd is composed of nine hundred and ninety lookers-on for one disturber of the peace. But a little anger will get gradually mixed up with the business. There will be a fight on a small scale. Just one drop of blood will be tapped: and then!

Another knows exactly the position of affairs, having exceptional advantages for getting the best information. The whole affair is Orleanist to the centre. The *Rappel* has an obvious meaning. The men who ran away from Paris in revolution are ready to return, if their adherents will promise that not one of them shall receive the least scratch by the way. The working class is profoundly moved—but not towards the Orleans, except as that most likely to furnish a King Log,—the next best thing



to a République. But what have the Orleanists got to their back? Who among them is encompassed with the smallest popular sympathy? Who are their lieutenants? Thiers is too old to begin over again; and the men who might have served them are dead. The young generation know them not, and express no wish to know them. Why should they? The Government of July was reputable in many ways. The court was virtuous; Louis Philippe was *bon père de famille*, but he was of the material out of which you carve a grocer, not a king. He, and the like of him, would not do again. And yet this rioting along the Boulevards is Orleanist! But then the Orleanists are rich, and can afford to treat themselves to a distraction, to break the sadness of exile.

Another. Paris has protested, Paris has triumphed—although she has no reason to be proud of her new men, who will only make the Chamber more like a bear-garden than it was. What more does she want? She will get Rochefort, unless Carnot is opposed to him. And then? Does any rational man think for a moment that France would consent to make ministers of any of these brawlers? These are the men who are responsible for the rioting which is going forward in the great towns. What interpretation can be put on Bancel's address? When shall we be a wise race? Here we are, cheering a set of loud-mouthed fellows who are the

very obstructives to liberty. Rochefort ! The man of *gros mots* ; the gentleman with the most capacious hand for lifting mud !

Girardin has spoken the right word. We must accept the position we have got, and not turn back the country fifty years, to serve a fresh apprenticeship to liberty. But back we are drifting. The troops are ordered out earlier to-night, and already the Government have fifteen hundred prisoners at Bicêtre and the Conciergerie. "Have you seen the black eye of our friend B ? He was *au violon* all night."—"Serve him right."

Poor Devisme ! He has not a gun in his shop. The shutters have been up all day. He must bless Orleanists, Republicans, and Messieurs les Voyous—their obedient servants—at a price !

But, I repeat, gentlemen, it is all over. The *Bourgeois* has taken the matter into his own hand, since M. Pietri will not, or does not, protect his property. The *voyous* who appear, to touch shop-fronts again, will get a hot reception from the shop-keepers, who have armed themselves with stout sticks like the *sergents de ville*. Society is getting into a passion, and will not be robbed without making a fight for it. But all is over—all is over. The Emperor's pluck put an end to it.

And M. Rouher's reign is for ever closed. He is to be President of the Senate or Governor of Algeria. He is good enough—for the Arabs.

This is the end of Act the First produced by the strong writing. It might have been worse ; for journalism, as it has developed in Paris during the last three months, has consisted of invective for the most part ; with just a pinch, at wide intervals, of logic. Students of modern journalism will make a collection of French papers for 1869, and note, and file them. They will furnish a wonderful chapter of history.

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KING HUGO.

October, 1869.

WHAT does King Hugo want? He is copious. The reader shall say whether he is explicit. In his letter to the five literary founders of the *Rappel* (tin trumpeters who are to play in time and harmony, following a *bâton* beating above the chimney-pots of Hauteville House) he hugs the title of the journal in the establishment of which he is not able, alas ! to participate.

“Le *Rappel*. J’aime tous les sens de ce mot : Rappel des principes, par la conscience ; rappel des vérités, par la philosophie ; rappel du devoir, par le droit ; rappel des morts, par le respect ; rappel du châtiment, par la justice ; rappel du passé, par l’histoire ; rappel de l’avenir, par la logique ; rappel des faits, par le courage ; rappel de l’idéal dans l’art, par la pensée ; rappel du progrès par la science, par l’expérience et le calcul ; rappel de Dieu dans

les religions, par l'élimination des idolâtries ; rappel de la loi à l'ordre, par l'abolition de la peine de mort ; rappel du peuple à la souveraineté, par le suffrage universel renseigné ; rappel de l'égalité, par l'enseignement gratuit et obligatoire ; rappel de la liberté, par le réveil de la France ; rappel de la lumière, par le cri : *Fiat jus !* ”

If points of exclamation were equivalent to bayonets, I would not give a week to M. Hugo's opponents, albeit they are the entire human race—as far as I can gather—with the exception of a few thousand men, unfortunately mostly of the working-class, who have caught the generous flames of the dreamers only to be landed in a boiling cauldron of words like the above. The roll of M. Hugo's periods has the effect of the drum upon certain generous, half-informed natures ; and they “fall in” to them ; march to them ; and will shoulder arms at the word of command from his lieutenants. He never gives them time to mar their dreams “by tracing their source too well.” They are served, hot and hot. His paper is to the poor fellows who buy it, even when sous are scarcest, what the hot *brioques* are to Gavroche in December, when the east wind sweeps the Boulevards. His teeth chatter as he drops the money, and picks up the fiery lump : but do you think the *marchande* prays at night, for a southern wind and warm weather for his poor denuded bones ?

The *Rappel* is to be a luminous and steely weapon : now a sword, and now a ray of light ! The poet, old and sad, sits apart, and claps his hands and cries " Courage ! " Remember, he says, the potency of laughter. You are about to take rank, as the auxiliaries of all good intentions, in the sparkling legion of the comic papers of Paris. I can do but little. When I have pronounced the word " duty," I have already nearly done. Above all, be brotherly. I have two emotions in my heart, which I call " conciliation " and " reconciliation "—the former for ideas, the latter for men.

Then the old apostle of peace who sits apart, and claps his hands—his gold-bags rattling as he moves—bids his lieutenants to strike home. The man with conciliation and reconciliation in his soul, exhorts his troops whom he inspires—with the lively Channel waves between them—to beware, lest a single projectile should be wasted !

" Let not a ball fall short in the battle of principles. The democratic legion has two aspects—one political and one literary. The political flag bears the numbers '89 and '92 ; the literary standard is emblazoned 1830. These dates of double ray, illumine—Right on the one hand, and Thought on the other—and they mean, together : Revolution. We prefer the *pêle-mêle* of drama to ceremonial tragedy, and Paris to Versailles."

The old, sad man pops centuries into nut-shells.

The fifteenth century is the Pope; the sixteenth, the Emperor; the seventeenth, the King; the nineteenth, Man! Man, come forth, erect and free, from that sublime gulf, the eighteenth century! He approves his lieutenants who promise to be smiling and disagreeable. To smile is to fight. Irony affrights hydras, and Cæsarism is one. "Remember," he says, "the cock crowing on the back of the tiger. The cock is irony: France also."

And pray how shall we place the tiger? Shall we put a red cap over his cruel eyes? He is *sans culotte* ready to our hand. His breath is hot; and he is alive when the stars are shining.

M. Hugo, and all his disciples, are great in sovereignties—hating sovereigns. The poet is at a perpetual *sacre*. He has just crowned Irony! He says that the eighteenth century showed forth the sovereignty of Irony. Compare the twelve labours of Hercules with the twelve labours of Voltaire! Prejudices are serpents in the cradle.

In M. Hugo's letter to the five founders of the *Rappel*, through the cloudlands of which I have been wandering, at moments wondering whether I should ever reach solid ground again; I at length reach a mountain-top—for a moment.

M. Hugo, in 1851, in the days of the Republic, said, from the tribune of the Assembly, "I denounce a plot, the object of which is the re-establishment

of the Empire." M. Dupin hereupon threatened to call him to order; but a compassionate member cried, "M. Hugo doesn't know what he is talking about"—and he was saved from the awful consequences of the presidential thunderbolt. "Happily," the poet remarks, "I have a reputation for stupidity; and this saved me."

Madame Vestris, in the heyday of her beauty, settles her mouth, wreathes her very daintiest smile, advances to the foot-lights, and casts this into the entranced pit,—“Everybody knows how very ugly I am!” “Everybody knows how stupid I am!” says M. Hugo. If we asserted, in our calmer moments, after the play, that both artists gagged their parts, should we libel either?

But here is my point of *terra-firma*. The poet is very severe on M. Dupin, saying that he kept his thunderbolt where he plugged his flag, and later, would have been glad to hide himself, viz., in his pocket. Is there no pane of glass in all M. Hugo's house—that he throws stones so plentifully—and is a moral Vesuvius, always in eruption? It is more than whispered about among people in Paris not likely to be misinformed, that M. Hugo talked with *Napoléon le Petit*, in days not far preceding the Coup d'Etat; and that the calm judgment of the Prince-President was, that the Empire could get no good out of Pegasus with the *mors aux dents*. The poet has never been in the habit of valuing his song

at a small lump of sugar. Experience has justified Napoleon : and the Empire, with Hugo for its Béranger, would have been very much where it is with the author of *Les Châtiments*, patting Revolution in Paris on the back, from the safety of Hauteville House.

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## CÆSAR IS ILL.

October, 1869.

DIP your spoon into his soup ; slip finger and thumb under his sleeve, and feel his pulse. When he sleeps, lay your head against his heart, and count its beatings. Does he cry aloud in the fiercest passages of his pain ? be at hand, and keep the register upon a tally-stick—a notch to each paroxysm. Cæsar is ill. He is in a blue flannel dressing-gown, ungloved, unshorn, with drooping moustache and lack-lustre eye ; the monarch put away, and present only the creature, tortured and shaken like any peasant of the swamps ! Then have at him ! Sketch him when he winces ; be at his elbow when he turns from his food ; reckon narrowly the chances against him ; and be sure he remembers, day by day, that his funeral can, at the most, occupy only two hours, let the car crawl as it may between the Tuileries and the Invalides. Then, when the old soldiers of the Empire shall have fired the last round, and the director of Funeral Poms



shall have folded the black cloths, and carried them off nimbly in the familiar green vans ; who will give another thought to the thing that will be left in the vault under the new gilded dome, or to the Sword of Solferino that will lie beside that of Austerlitz ? Spare him not, albeit he has been a mighty worker in history. Rend his heart, if you can, while it is feeling flesh, by putting under his eye all his littleness and all your ingratitude. Be quite sure you remember no good he has wrought ; no nobility of intelligence and of soul which he has discovered ; no pledge of his devotion to France which he has given through the Herculean labours of his most marvellous life. “ Respect the burden,” said the uncle of sick Cæsar of St. Cloud ; but hearken not to the voice from Marengo appealing for a pinch of justice to the flaming sword that delivered Italy out of bondage. The lion is smitten : look then to the heaviness of your hoofs !

It matters nothing in the balance between Napoleon the Third, lately stretched upon his bed at St. Cloud, and the hostile press of Paris, how he has governed. That which is blameworthy in the articles which the furtively and openly unfriendly papers have published on his sickness, is, not the criticism, but the blithe inhumanity, the touch-and-go comment on a creature in suffering, the hilarious application of analysis to the death-sweat ! Not content with the exaggeration of every unfavourable

rumour, and the dismissal of the living man as something past and gone, that would be out of the way and out of men's minds in a fortnight; the directors of the papers which are dubbed "Liberal," have kept up the devilish game, with the help of even light medical writers.

The doctor has been called into the newspaper office to tell the French people how soon, in all reasonable probability, their Emperor will die, and free vent will be given to the score of political madcaps, who are bent on toppling everything over, for the vainglory of building up another chaotic, volcanic, ruinous *régime*, to be prodigal of resounding phrases about the "sovereignty of the people" and the like—and productive of, general bankruptcy.

The means, shamelessly employed, should and will suffice to put a stigma on the purpose. He who is ruthless at the sick bedside of his bitterest foe, is not the man to trust with the future of a kitten.

Happily, we have no conception in England, of a free condition of the public mind, that would tolerate a burlesque of a surgical operation. Imagine a merry-andrew flourishing a lancet and a probe: a surgical table for light comedy business: vivisection amid roars of laughter!

When, not many months ago, I wrote about the liberties which had been given to the French press,

and the uses to which M. Rochefort was devoting them, I expressed a hope that the licentious extravagances of 1848 would not be renewed, to give an excuse to authority for a return to a system of repression.

The argument I then held is good now. The press laws of France must not be judged by the English standard. In England the public is the severe censor. The writer who passes the bounds of decency is admonished by his readers, who cast his sheet to the winds, and trample it under their angry feet. In like manner, he who argues in favour of a general *bouleversement*, and recklessly attacks "the powers that be," is left unread. Suppose the English royal family subjected to the outrages which accompanied the illness of Napoleon. We cannot conceive the possibility of maintaining a print like the *Rappel* or the *Reveil* for a week, after the appearance of such articles as those which dealt with the Emperor during his sickness.

The English public would resent the inhumanity : call the writers jackals—and run them to earth.

The result which has now been expected for some time past is—I am almost prepared to say—cordially as I detest the least curb put upon free speaking and printing—deserved.

It was not wise liberty which the sick Emperor's enemies used, to shake his throne while he was

laid up in bed ; but licence such as would not be tolerated in free—in free and stable—England, for a single day. Our freedom wears, *because* such licence turns every honest citizen into a policeman, and every reader into an officer of public safety.

It must be said : the cruel side of the French character has peeped out once again. In the thousands of light-hearted readers who can enjoy fantastic dancing by the banks of the Styx,—who can find no better use for a poor human skull than to fix a gala candle in it ; and who can laugh and be merry over the daily visits of three doctors to their sovereign,—there is surely something wanting ! In this fierce, cutting levity, this banqueting on a bed of pain,—and this utter forgetfulness of every item of a debt to the man whom they crowned with garlands when he swept, with his victorious host, along the *Via Sacra* from Vincennes to the Tuileries, home from emancipated Italy,—there is a leaven inexpressibly repulsive to men of calmer race and blood. Observe, pray, that my remark applies only to that section of the French people which is swayed by the Gavroche party.

It was announced that the Emperor procured and read the medical articles which condemned him to a speedy death ; and which told his subjects how the vital functions would soon fail in power to

repair the waste of blood caused by his bodily affliction. The perusal did not visibly alarm him.

At the same time a portrait of the husband and father is presented, to the minutest details, by no friendly hand—and yet the picture is winning in spite of the artist. It is grudgingly conceded that Napoleon the Third has the fine old manner of the chivalrous French gentleman, and bears himself towards his wife with affectionate grace, patience, and consideration. The republican spirit is not above the description of a little Court millinery; and gratefully enjoys its Jenkins, who tells the despisers of kings and queens how the Emperor and Empress *tutoyent* one another at the breakfast-table in the bedroom, when Her Majesty is in a *peignoir*, red or purple, and plays with the dainty slippers on her feet.

The Emperor's illness was, in a party literary sense, turned, uncompromisingly to every possible account. His bedroom is as well known as the Tour St. Jacques. That he soaks his bread in his tea in the morning is common knowledge, purchasable at the kiosks. His gastronomy is laid bare; and, for dark purposes, I doubt not, it is made known in the city which holds the great Dumas at work on his long-promised book on the French cuisine, and which Jules Gouffé has chosen as the scene of his declining years—that the Imperial family have a weakness for brisket of veal!

Now Jenkins, of England, for very sufficient reasons, stopped at the halls of great people's houses. The French chroniqueur is a bird of far nobler pinion, and gets into the bedrooms. I cannot see that he is restrained by a single particle of feeling, nor by a spark of delicacy. I know, we English, are reputed fastidious and prone to the use of the word "shocking;" \* but we are not so squeamish as the untravelled chroniqueur imagines. We suffer Formosa, but we would not stand the free-and-easy light pen of France—yet!

The chroniqueur can serve many dishes. To the *irreconcilable* he can give the low number of the Emperor's pulse; count his days, and hilariously predict the ingratitude of the nation on the morrow of the Imperial obsequies. He can frighten the Bourse with a picture of Cæsar in a blue flannel dressing-gown, and affect the funds by discovering the Imperial valet administering Bordeaux cut with Vichy water, as the last word of baffled science on the mortal malady. The worst feature of the *métier* is the comedy and the extravaganza played as they have been of late. Its hollowness and utter lack of earnestness are proved by the readiness with which the light, prying writer will turn his hand to any hero; pull down any god of yesterday;

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\* A word seldom used in the sense given to it by French writers.

and sit before anything in power or disgrace, and wait to fetch and carry.

Victor Hugo, was blessing little children and transacting a little ceremonial crying in Switzerland, during the fine weather: and he had a Jenkins told off in his wake. Cæsar lay sick: and King Hugo strutted in triumph at Lausanne. The contrast was one to which the big drums of the Gavroche party loved to draw popular attention. And bad taste and bad feeling weighed as nothing in the effort.

But the people remained quiet, and never showed the least disposition to pull their own capital about their own ears—for the prospective delight of being shown over the ruins, by M. Rochefort, with his *Lantern*; or of being remodelled, from Hauteville House, by telegraph.

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### THE PANTIN TRAGEDY.

October, 1869.

I RECUR to the light literature which, like thistle-down in the field, shows whither the current is tending; the tone of public feeling—the public, in fine, upon whom the Gavroche party are endeavouring to act. It is clear, I am afraid, that this public will not be disgusted by the worst the Gavroche organs may have to say.

Mark a passage in the year's history.

The picture has been painted in with patient touches in every part. Not a speck of blood, a hair of the murdered heads, a vein of the homicidal hand, has been slurred over. The materials have been sought far and wide; not an incident has been lost; no sigh has passed unrecorded upon the idle wind. The desolated homes of the butchered family,—the acute distresses of the criminal's relatives,—the nightmare of the murderer,—his attitude in the Morgue,—the trodden field at Pantin, where the bodies were raked up,—the emptied red grave marked by a stone, upon which a sentimental visitor among the thousands had cast a branch of mignonette,—the age of the Havre *gendarme* who arrested Troppmann,—the empty house of the Kincks at Roubaix, the starving chickens and the grey shutters,—the funeral of the victims,—and the letters of the father and brothers,—were turned to the fullest account.

The banquet of the savages was bountifully served, and with a searching art which our English reporters and penny-a-liners have not yet approached.

We English are behind France in art-manufactures, in dress, in the *cuisine*. We can serve up the hot and cold in bulk; but when there is a fastidious, exacting palate waiting at the mahogany tree, we are clumsy to brutality.

Only the other day I saw, in an English illus-



trated paper, a picture of truffle-gathering, accompanied by letter-press that treated of truffles as though they were on a gastronomic line with ploughboy cabbage.\* We take kindly to the details of a great murder of the Manning type, and justice should be done to the zeal with which the British penny-a-liner can serve his public when the scent is keen, and the papers are running a neck-and-neck race for bloody details; but I insist that we fall far short of the Paris *chroniqueur* who has a great case like that of Pantin on hand. The British explorer in the murderer's footsteps can just tell in plain words the experiences which light upon his path; whereas the Parisian has a Zouave's lightness of step—a cheerfulness which the Morgue cannot overcome; and he has a roundelay ready to your whim.

For a day or two, sharply-pencilled sketches of the mangled human flesh,—the night scene on the bare plain under the moon, and when the blood got to the surface and glared to the eyes of the affrighted husbandman;—of the doctor's work upon the Morgue slabs, with the fountain-water trickling over it;—of blood, and always blood, till the heart is at white heat, and the reader's eyes are fixed, and he can bear no more!

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\* The potato is the democrat's truffle, it has been remarked, of late.

And then—a change of style, of attitude, of scene, of music. Pic-nics have been held in the *al fresco* workshop of Cain. The air of Pantin has been musical with corks. The Parisians must now have a song, jokes—murder-news whipped as light and smooth as Bignon's *Mayonnaise*. They are selling peacock's feathers upon the field of the murder: it is the hour for sprightliness. Pantin may be played upon. Louis Ratisbonne protests, in the *Débats*, as becomes a Christian gentleman, whose soul revolts over the dance which is proceeding, to fill up the interval between the Pantin night of crime and the sunrise scene of expiation on the *Place de la Roquette*; but the fiddlers are upon their tubs, and the jesters have not put on the motley for nothing. The clowns are footing it, with crape upon their arms. All the fun of the fair parts, to let the seven coffins go to the Field of Rest, and then closes again. Who can say a clever thing about the Morgue? How will funeral baked meats taste with Roederer? or does Madame prefer the sweeter wine of Widow Clicquot?

Come, let us have the verses to the Princess de Solms, who, according to rumour, assisted at the post mortem on Troppmann's victims!

Troppmann never lifted his cap when confronted with the corpses. It is true his hands were tied behind him; and the finest gentleman in France.

could hardly have done this civil thing under the circumstances. Why are there so many policemen gathered on the Pantin field? *Allons! a conundrum. A cause des at Troppmann! (attroupements). Elle est bonne!*

It is not "the hour of feeling," but that of merry-making, while the man in the Conciergerie is waiting for the *camisole de force*, and the toilet of the condemned, by the valet of Paris who leads the way to the knife of Dr. Guillotin. So, the Pantin field shall be called the Troppmann cemetery. People have been talking about the "principal" victims. What is it that gives one murdered person precedence and importance over another? In order to impart dignity to the tragedy, the *chroniqueurs* have described the field as at Aubervilliers, and not Pantin—Pantin having a ridiculous reputation. A person of Pantin is a mock merchant, a mock count, a mock senator. But this, the mayor of Aubervilliers protests, is no reason why his realm should be saddled with the infamy; and he insists, amid volleys of laughter, that Pantin shall have all that belongs to Pantin.

The ball must be kept rolling. The pretty news-vendor of the Boulevard des Capucines was asked how business was doing? It had become flat, she said—"à présent, il nous manque le père."

Another ingenious observer has remarked that Troppmann would have had infinite trouble in dis-

posing of the Kinck property had he got clear off with it, since he was not of age—

“*Il n'est pas majeur, mais il est diablement émancipé,*” is the answer.

Emile Blavet, in his criticism of “*Fausse Monnaie*,” at the Théâtre de Cluny, ingeniously condemns a lugubrious actor, saying, “He plays the part of the Maestro a little too much *à la Troppmann*. Had he assassinated the entire Kinck family, he could not have been gloomier.”

The fun spreads to the Bourse, and we have a comic dialogue between two stockbrokers, who lament that the illness of the Emperor and the Pantin murder have—*clashed*! Aurélien Scholl, in his *Lorgnon*, records, in his lightest vein, how Troppmann has crowned his misdeeds by strangling the ex-Carmelite, Hyacinthe; but he has saved the Church from the scandal which the eloquent protest of the preacher, who had just booted himself, was threatening to create. In short, the *Troppmann-manie* is at its height, and it is hinted that the murderer has saved the Ministers!

People have recovered from the terror, and are delighted with those who will jest their fears away.

M. Charleroi of the *Tintamarre*, struck with the development of assassination in France, and the necessity for every conceivable precaution in the shady electoral byways which abound under the patronage of the friends of Gavroche, offers

the Assassin's Guide in Paris—for the special benefit of "*candidats-assassins*"! Here are a few valuable directions :

1. Keep your locks cut close. If your hair is long, it may be seized, and you will be shaken and disconcerted—and sometimes a little will remain in the hands of the dead man.

2. Never buy arms at one of the known gun-makers. Win a knife or a pistol, as by accident, at one of the *barrière fairs*. Fair dealers are never to be found.

3. Keep your nails short. If you seize the throat of your mother-in-law, the nails may betray you by their marks. Or, you may break them—mothers-in-law are so tough!

4. Give sous to the poor, that you may be taken for a good man.

5. Never wear linen marked with your initials, or have it marked with the initials of a well-known *huissier*. If you lose your handkerchief, they are put off the scent.

6. Place no confidence in your wife. If there is anything to be feared from living woman, it is above all from one's wife.

The subject will take many ingenious, perhaps witty, forms yet; but already the literary reporters have proved their versatility, their alertness, and their heartlessness. Botanizing on a grave is tame: spread the *nappe*, produce the *terraine*, cool the

champagne in the cemetery mould, and, by way of dessert, black grapes from Fontainebleau.

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### THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

October, 1869.

COMPARISONS are made between the liberties of England and those of France every day : as though France had cruel chains upon her, and England unfettered wings. It will surprise many in France to hear of customs and laws which exist in old, free England ; as it has astonished Englishmen to find, on inquiry, after having come in contact with French journalists foaming at the mouth and talking about *lettres de cachet* and the Bastile, that there is actually more than liberty—there is licence, under the very cocked hats of the Emperor's police.

As there are laws in England which would not be suffered to exist twenty-four hours in France ; so there are in France institutions, restraints, that the English people would break with an ugly rush. The traces of the revolutions through which the French people have passed, are apparent in all the laws that affect the well-being of the mass. Apply our County Court procedure to French working-men, and no army would be able to keep the people out of the streets, or the roads unturned. Establish the English Poor Laws in Paris as they

are worked in London ; transfer the Gwydyr House staff to M. Husson's spacious hotel of the Assistance Publique in the Avenue Victoria. Why, the whole mass of the poor, with the people at their backs, would sweep the hotel out in an hour. In the severest days of personal government, it would have been dangerous to send the brokers round the working quarters of Paris, as they have been traveling of late under the rating provisions of the Reform Bill, in the poorer districts of London. It is not permitted to clear a man's bed from under him, in France. The rich get no advantage, even in the way of bail. Compare, in short, the French code, which comprehends all the laws that touch the citizen in his daily life, with our confusion and conflict of the old with the new ; and it will be seen that our neighbours, in the mass, are freer from social oppression than we are. Our laws have been made by, and for, the rich. They are tinged with feudalism, and the workman has not yet completely realized his dignity as a citizen, like his French neighbour. This is evident in the bearing of the two men. While the Frenchman is independent and self-possessed in every company, the Englishman is shy, nervous, and awkward in the presence of his social superiors ; or, he is coarsely defiant. The Frenchman has a sense of his personal dignity which never leaves him, and which he carries through the transaction of the humblest duties.

Compare English with French waiters ; English with French tradesmen ; English with French domestic servants,—and the self-respecting dignity of the French will show in striking relief against English shamefacedness, servility, and bluntness. The advent of the working-class to political power, as electors, has long ago ceased to be a public question in France. He is never for one moment disturbed with a passing idea that he is not in every conceivable and possible respect the equal, as a citizen, of the bourgeois—of his master—of everybody. At the stormy electoral meetings of Paris, Gavroche and his friends are composed of men of various callings—we should say, of different classes ; but the equality is absolute—and he would be in danger of personal violence, as well as of overwhelming ridicule, who should give himself superior airs in the steamy rooms of “ the sovereign people.”

Forty years ago, when Henri Heine was observing the cast of the European mind, and cutting out sharp portraits of Italians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, by no means forgetting his own countrymen ; he made some comparisons between the kinds of liberty affected by various races, which are proved true to-day : which never, indeed, had a truer look than a few mornings ago, when the fantastic French crowd was about poor Deputy Baudin’s grave, quite neglectful of Heine’s, that is but a stone’s throw away. Not one would have taken the trouble to



throw a stone towards it to indicate its whereabouts, on that November morning.

Let me bring forth then, in this moment of excitement amid the most easily moved and promptly forgetful race in Europe, the words of the brilliant German who loved his Paris so well ; and was strong by his Teutonic birth ; and was brilliant by contact with races foreign to his own. He speaks of liberty in England, France, and Germany.

“ But if the main want of the Englishman is personal liberty, the Frenchman can, at a pinch, do without it ; provided always that he is accommodated with that portion of freedom which we call equality. The French are not a home, but they are a sociable, people. They cannot endure those silent gatherings which they call *conversations Anglaises*. They run, chattering, from café to club, and from club to drawing-room. Their light thin champagne blood, and their innate alertness in the common concerns of daily life, make them prone to sociability—the soul, and first condition of which is equality. Equality was the natural consequence of the perfection of the social element in France ; and leaving the causes of the revolution out of the question, it is clear that it found its chief organs among those *spirituels roturiers*, who frequented the *salons* of Paris on a footing of seeming equality with the nobility, but upon whom, from time to time, a hardly perceptible and therefore more wounding

feudal smile played, recalling to them their great and outrageous inequality. And when the *canaille roturière* took the liberty of decapitating the *haute noblesse*, they coveted less the inheritance of their goods than of their ancestors. We are the more led to the belief that this thirst for equality was the main lever of the revolution, because we find that the French soon felt contented and happy under the rule of their great Emperor; who, taking into consideration the incapacity of these prodigals, maintained all their liberty under his severe *régime*, and left in their keeping only the joy of a full and glorious equality.

“The Englishman bears with much greater patience than the Frenchman can show, the sight of a privileged aristocracy. He consoles himself with the thought that the rights which he possesses prevent this aristocracy from interfering with his domestic comforts or his means of existence. These aristocrats never display their privileges, like the continental *noblesse*. Gay ribbons are seen in the streets of public places only upon women’s bonnets; and gold and silver lace only upon the backs of lacqueys. Moreover, the gaudy liveries of many colours that annoy us, and denote an exclusive and privileged military caste, are nothing more in England than an honorary distinction. The English officer, his duty over, hastens to doff his scarlet coat (like an actor wiping away his paint)

and to put on the frock-coat, and become a simple gentleman. It is only on the stage of St. James's that decorations are prized, and that the rags of the middle ages are displayed. Here the ribbons flaunt and the stars flash; the silk breeches and satin tails rustle; golden spurs and exploded French clatter; the knight swells with pride, and the noble lady airs herself. But what does a free Englishman care about the comedy performed at St. James's! It never interferes with him, and he may play the same comedy at home if he pleases; make his servants kneel before him, and amuse himself with his cook's garter—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*.

“As for the Germans—they want neither liberty nor equality. They are a speculative, idealistic, dreaming people, who live in the past and future, and have no present. The English and French have a present. With them each day has its struggle, its antagonism, and its history. The German has nothing to fight about. When he began to suspect, however, that there might be desirable things, his philosophers wisely taught him to doubt even the existence of these things. It cannot be denied that Germans love liberty, but differently from other people. The Englishman loves liberty as he loves his wife. He possesses her, and albeit he does not treat her over tenderly, he knows how, on occasion, to protect her like a man;—and woe unto the red-coat who penetrates

the sanctuary of his bed-chamber—let him be officer or petty officer. The Frenchman loves liberty, like the betrothed of his choice. He burns for her; he is full of flame; he casts himself at her feet with the wildest protestations; he fights unto death for her; and for her he commits a thousand follies. The German loves liberty as he loves his old grandmother.”

This is, on the whole, just: and at this moment it would be well for Frenchmen if they would spare a few flowers from the overloaded tomb of Citizen Baudin for the earth that lies upon the bosom of Henri Heine.

If, moreover, they would send a few calm, unprejudiced delegates from socialist, democratic, revolutionary centres, to London; and give them for mission, the examination of the liberty England prizes at this moment, they would find the privileged aristocracy still in full enjoyment of its rights. The stars and garters remain the exclusive property of the old caste. Every office of great honour in the three kingdoms is the possession of the governing families. The plebeian Englishman is content with this state of illogical inequality, because he has not the Frenchman's quick insight, nor his abhorrence of a stupidity.

A Frenchman read, in his evening paper, not many months ago, that a poor English widow had been imprisoned some half-dozen times, for a debt

of a few shillings. He appealed to me and others of my countrymen to contradict the enormity laid to the charge of our institutions. But the enormity was a fact, and one among a thousand. It led us to talk about the tally system—its extent and manifold evils eating into the very heart of English poverty. If this system were laid nakedly under the eyes of working-men of Paris, it would not, probably, make them less noisy clamourers for the sovereignty of the people, nor calm the impetuosity of St. Simonism, Fourierism, or any other ism that has taken to wear the blouse; but it would make them cease to talk about *la vieille Angleterre* and her liberties—since liberty without absolute equality before the law, they cannot understand. The grand irony put about the breast of a young nobleman just out of his teens, who had done nothing, nor shown the least sign of being able to do anything for his country, would be met with a shout of derision. Gavroche would make the round of his acquaintance, and riddle with his plentiful small-shot the Government that had committed the *fameuse bêtise*. Indeed, if he could be made a constant reader of the reports of English police-courts and county courts, he would use us as illustrations of the poisonous, fungous growth, that still crops up again and again, defying Reforms and Bills of Rights, and Charters, while the cold shade of a privileged aristocracy overshadows the land.

I don't say Gavroche would be right ; but this he would say of our *vieille Angleterre* ; and he would concede, possibly, that the illustrious child of the sovereign people, Napoleon the First, did something for the humblest Frenchman, when he drew out the Code which makes plain to all, the laws that rule and control all.

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#### AGITATION IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

October, 1869.

THE Revolutions have one and all left profound marks in the habits, modes of thought—nay, in the character, of Frenchmen. The remark is old : but necessary again, when on all sides I find writers comparing the manner and aims of political activity—as it is developing itself under the new liberties given by Napoleon the Third—with the British method of agitating and carrying questions. In England we are approaching the old French monster demonstrations, with flags and marshals, and women in the rank and file, and other ominous street-shows of hot-opinion ; while in Paris there are a few hopeful signs of that moderation, with strength, which was most imposingly and splendidly shown through the agitation for the Repeal of the Corn-Laws. Reflect that, for sober, dignified determination, the latter exhibitions of popular

strength, trailing through the thoroughfares of London, cannot bear comparison with the meetings over which Mr. Cobden cast the witchery of his English tongue. The feeling is sharper now. A class animosity has been raised—I need not pause to say how and why—which did not exist thirty years ago; which was hardly seen, indeed, as recently as the cotton famine times. It is this class anger which has gallicised English popular manifestations; and it is the dying out of class distinctions in France which has anglicised her stoutest and truest friends of liberty. The wildest ranter at one of the *barrière* meetings does not cry *à bas l'aristo*, for he is assured that no class—with privileges and partial laws—is over him. The Revolutions have swept him far out of the cold shade of aristocracy; and he has ceased to think of the Faubourg Saint Germain's wizened mind and mien, except when he would have a merry laugh in the *petit journal*; or is clearing the cobwebs from his work-life in the theatrical *paradis* of his choice. He has made the patrician a comedy character, and planted him in the centre of his carnival! His grandfathers laid cruel hands on him; and, in the work of clearance, committed many cowardly, shameful, savage acts. His blood grew white-hot, and he tore his enemy and mauled him as vermin. The grandson had no fears in the old direction. His personal dignity; his equality before

his fellow,—and the said fellow handles a marshal's baton, or is jewel-capped and enthroned—is as firmly based as the Pont-Neuf. But being suddenly loosed, in the way of writing and talking, he feels all the wildness which is natural to every being at the loosing of it. He must talk and write; and both talking and writing must hit at the constituted authorities. That he has no overwhelming, unbearable grievance left upon him, is shown in the placards which announce a series of Republican meetings. The heads of these meetings are at a loss for sounding lines—for subjects of debate. They must e'en trot out the old servants, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. They have turned out all the old clothes of Socialism; and the wearers have been laughed at, like the few guardsmen of 1815, who shuffle to the Place Vendôme on the Little Corporal's fête day, to hang garlands upon the railings of the hero's gun-metal monument. And when the leaders of disorder—lieutenants of the Hugo dynasty, as they are derisively called, in the satirical papers which are not of this dynasty—try to make an appointment for a revolution in the open streets; the white blouse of to-day plants his hand in his capacious pockets, plugs his pipe, and, laughing, waits for the evening papers.

Rocheftort has served his turn. The call for him was scarcely more serious, although it was infinitely



more dangerous, than that for Lambert. A people so easily tickled, cannot remember *all* the straws which touch their cheek. They have already finished with Gambetta. In none of the names that have been lately set upon the walls, and heralded in the *Rappel* and kindred journals, is there the stuff that will endure. They represent, one and all, mischief, noise, the cessation of trade, troops in the street, impossible theories of life, everybody master; and then, profound discouragement under a disgraced flag, general quarrelling, everybody in the wrong; with, finally, an armed hand, to put all in order—by putting all in bondage once more!

I should be very glad to see some enterprising speculator translate just six consecutive copies of *Le Rappel*; and bind them in octavo, for the edification of the British public. The number lying before me, opens with a violent, feverish, spasmodic poem, by Victor Hugo, called “The Three Horses,” the lean horse being the poor agricultural labourer’s beast. The insult intended to the Emperor is plain: but it is clumsy, and therefore will not hit home. M. Rochefort follows, with a series of his impertinences, each marked by the drawing of a lantern. Little enough light shines from under any of them; but very much that is petty, and of taste so low, that were an English journal to write parallel insults about Queen Victoria and her

family, and tack the shabbiest motives to every State act, it would find no publisher in Holywell Street. To call the man who is the Chief of the State, and is respected by as many thousands as M. Rochefort can count individual admirers, the lodger of the Tuileries, is to descend to the very lowest description of opposition journalism.

Can writing like this serve the cause of enduring liberty? Will the often planted and often uprooted tree flourish in soil like this? It is to the credit of the mass of the French people that they see the juggle; that they recognise the apostles of disorder; that they perceive the kind of solid glory they would get under a *régime* in which the lesser men of 1848 would advance to take foremost places. All these rioters with pen and tongue, command the rounded phrases of the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848; and, vain as children with new pinafores, call one another "citizen," and cannot conduct a public meeting without breaking the law. They are vain to absurdity when they have constituted themselves martyrs, by having been locked up all night!

Most people on the English side of the Channel will be sorry to see the respected name of Louis Blanc mixed up with the raging *troupe* of the *Rappel*. He has suffered with dignity for his opinions; and has laboured brilliantly and profitably for his country, through a painful exile. Compare him for

a moment with M. Henri Rochefort. Contrast him with M. Pyat! Put him with the other candidates of the *Rappel* clique, who deafen Paris with their noisy egotism! The sum of all the rant in the *Rappel*, and of the republican electoral meetings, means just this: "France is great: France is glorious: France is the leading nation of the world—then hand her over to us, and we will at once give her that which England has been seeking, patiently and quietly, for two centuries in vain—perfect Government! The men who have been at the helm of the State by the banks of the Seine for the last eighteen years, are a set of rascals, knaves, and fools. We alone are honest; we alone are great in wisdom and in virtue. Fly to us!"

And the French nation is not gratefully besieging the offices of the *Rappel*; albeit M. Victor Hugo opens his *nouveaux châtimens*, as the epilogue of the Empire!

I am not a panegyrist of the Second Empire; but I see that under this *régime*, Frenchmen have grown in power and prestige. The national wealth has enormously increased. Under the order which has remained undisturbed, commerce and the arts have flourished. Moreover, and lastly, the gallant spirit of the people has vindicated its right to a free press and free speech. There is now a real Representative Chamber; there are responsible Ministers. Personal Government is at an end.

Order remains with liberty. This is the end for which three disastrous revolutions have been fought at the cost of incalculable misery. There is in the Legislative Chamber a sound, able, thoroughly-tried liberal band of politicians, who are ready to consolidate the liberty that has been gained, and to obtain that which may be properly demanded. Jules Favre, Ollivier, and Jules Simon are leaders of this moderate band; and it is, I repeat, a happy augury for a strong and free France to come, that the great mass of their countrymen remain, to this time at any rate, of their way of thinking. There is a far better chance for a free and flourishing nation without, than with, the Gavroche party. The success of madcaps (who have a selfish method in their madness) calling each other citizens, and presenting candidates who will not fulfil the first conditions of candidature—would be only a signal for disorder, that would destroy all the work of the last eighteen years, and drive liberty away once more at the point of the bayonet.

“’Tis Order maketh people great :  
Seek ye her cheery light, and evermore withstand  
The spirit of Faction—bitter nurse of men,  
That comes with poverty and sorrow in her hand.”

But disorder maketh little men great, for a moment; and hence the noisy people of the *Reveil*, the *Rappel*, the *Eclipse*, and the rest of the organs of disorder.

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## THE FRENCH RADICAL.

November, 1869.

ONE moment, Mr. Louis Blanc. Rotten legs have often been at a premium in election times in England: granted. Anything more disgraceful to rational men than an ordinary contested election, it is not easy to call to mind. The fighting, the bribery, the intimidation; the lying and cheating; the degradation of the citizen's first right by every means that money can compass; the unhandsome subterfuges of the candidate and his friends; the rise of the low and lawless to the surface, at the beckoning of the greedy rascality that quickens about the committee-room and the hustings—are granted. The prize-fighters, the publicans, the drunkenness, the head-breaking and window-smashing, are also granted.

And still we make no approach to Belleville, Clichy, and La Chapelle. In outward seeming, in the manner of coming and going, the electoral crowds of Paris shine in comparison with ours. There is much less drunkenness. There is no bribery. Each man has a sense of his dignity, of his conscience, as a citizen. The sense comes from the habit of thought which followed upon the Revolution; and which, as Heine explains, Napoleon left untouched through all the military severities of the First Empire. Each man on his way to his

meeting-place, is on a personal mission. He has his political and social ideas. That these are inspired by the revolutions which have gone before, is evident from the closeness with which he copies the forms of discontent of his father and grandfather. He puts titles away. The Emperor is Monsieur Bonaparte, or the Citizen Bonaparte—on an exact level with Gavroche. Gavroche is a Radical, he says; but match me an autocrat of his steel if you can. The sovereign people, as he understands the Majesty, is a tyrant of the severest order. He is wanting in respect for most things; and he is ready to impute the basest motives to all who have served the country. His force of language is astonishing. A richer and racier tongue never wagged in human head. All his venom is concentrated upon the fool. *L'homme capable* is a presence—is the only presence, that compels his cap from the crown of his head.

A week or two since (I had the incident from a friend) Gavroche and his companions were carousing in a wine-shop. One of their party saw a gentleman approaching from the Sorbonne. He turned upon his friends and said—

“Comrades, St. Marc Girardin is coming this way.”

The group of workmen turned out, and, as the learned professor passed, respectfully saluted him. You must understand this in the character of the

French *peuple*—*this* which is incomprehensible to the middle-class mercantile Englishman and to the English mechanic also—before your estimate of the mobs who swarm home behind Rochefort's cab, and are ready to chop up the very roots of society for bonfire wood, can be just and whole. The French Radical has inherited his creed—with additions to his inheritance, of course. He is in opposition always. His father created a dynasty, and his grandfather restored one, and his great-grandfather toppled a throne into the streets, and emptied St. Denis of the ashes of generations of kings—like a common dust-hole. For himself, he had a taste of revolution some nineteen years ago, and only a taste—enough to whet his appetite; enough to shape his course and heat his blood, and, in the political arena, to give him the instincts of the man-tiger. Equality is for ever upon his lips. His conviction is apparent in his gait; in the tone of his voice, and the cocking of his cap. He is the thirty-five-millionth section of a king. The slaves, rascals, thieves, perjurers, and rakes are all the citizens who administer the Government, represent him abroad, sit in the Senate, or speak from the pulpit. He lately observed at a meeting in the first Circumscription that all the virtue which is to be found in Paris after the eighteen years of Bonapartist rule, dwells in the garrets. The searcher after chastity must get as near as possible to the slates!

If we turn, in our survey of the French electoral crowds, and especially those of Paris, and particularly those who shout for Ledru, Pyat, and Rochefort, and Crémieux, to their religious aspect, we find *persiflage*. The *Rappel* notes, in a congratulatory tone, that secular burials are on the increase.

The figure of the representative unit of the million is full of interest and dramatic force; a case comprehending a jumble of many conflicting qualities and opinions. There are noble aspirations—dreams about “the parliament of man”—a decided wish to hasten forward “the federation of the world.”\* He has his theory of life as it should be—generally a sad, soul-destroying level—but warmed with broad human sympathies—with pity for his poor neighbour. The world, it seems to him, is *his* oyster. All who are not of his order are parasites. His hatred of men who affect to be his social superiors is so intense, and so warps his vision, that he turns upon parliaments and constitutions, and proclaims that he will do without them. Of this dream Ledru-Rollin (who knows Gavroche well, and who led him to the bloody days of June, 1848, as he would now lead him to chaos

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\* M. Adolphe Bertion presented himself as “the Candidate of Humanity,” to all the electors, at all the elections of the Universe. He was “for all and everything.” He was an ex-magistrate, agriculturist, merchant, tradesman, inventor, engineer, among other qualifications.



under a Committee of Public Safety and to national beggary with the *right* of every citizen to work) is the presiding hero. But Ledru must be Gavroche's most obedient. When a *voyou's* cap shall be a crown—and parliaments shall be as obsolete as the Wittenagemote—and the sovereign people shall be in full possession of the world—Ledru will wait outside the Tuileries for the orders of the people assembled in the Hall of Marshals. Ledru will help Gavroche into his coach, and be proud, for himself, to ride upon the box.

Nor will Gavroche be a tender master. He has a long account to pay off. The marshals of France shall be humble waiters on his sovereign pleasure. He will have no deputies, but messengers; eight-day clocks to be wound up with his own sovereign hands, to run down in any place appointed by him.\* The palaces he reserves for himself: any corner will do for his delegates.

With all this, he is *bon enfant*. A generous sentiment thills through his frame. He is in the seventh heaven when a citizen has done a noble action. He would have clasped George Peabody to his heart, had he given to Paris one tithe of the treasure he showered upon our London poor. A

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\* Lord John Russell objected, when standing for the City of London, to be a clock wound up at the Guildhall to run down at St. Stephen's.

*pompier* saved two or three lives at the imminent risk of his own a few months ago ; whereupon the heart of the whole capital warmed towards him, and bought his photograph by the thousand. A grace, a delicacy, a skilful operation, a happy thought, will touch Gavroche, and command his ungrudging applause. The rich man is no god of his idolatry. He ducks to none. His standards of the admirable are loftier and purer than those which guide the English masses. He is ready to make a revolution for an idea. He has many points which are, to him, infinitely more important than wages.

And with all this, no more ominous figure than that of Gavroche ever appeared in the van of civilization.

“ But what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom ? Vast, unwieldy, burdensome,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties ; not made to rule,  
But to subserve, where wisdom bears command.”

Gavroche has mighty strength, and half a share of wisdom ! He is quieter at his election ; he is purer ; he has loftier aims than his English brother—but he lacks patience, toleration, which the Englishman has—and, for the very best reasons in the world to his half-informed understanding, he would turn the throne into charcoal and give it to the Auvergnats to roast the chestnuts of the

sovereign people ; and he would light the rolls of parliament and all the charters he ever heard of, with the flaming *bâtons* of the marshals.

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### BELLEVILLE ORATORS.

November, 1869.

AN electoral meeting, at the Folies-Belleville, or La Chapelle—or in a quarry, amid the mushrooms. M. Gagne was received with laughter ; but he was not the wildest of the speakers. Poor M. Gagne is the scape-goat, the sovereign people's fool, of the moment. He wants to make laws without the help of a deliberative assembly. He is ready to establish an universal bank (the capital to be supplied by philanthropists) in order to abolish interest—and to do away with taxes. He is prepared to create an arch-monarch to be sovereign over all republican monarchs : but he has not quite solved the problem of universal unity—for the moment. The president is in his place : the assessors are at his elbows—the secretary is chosen.\* The bell, the sugar and water, and the commissioner of police complete the details. The sovereign people, headed by Gavroche, fill the room.

Thirty-five-millionth parts of the popular sove-

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\* On the 13th November, at La Chapelle, the Citizen Christ was secretary.

reign, with long hair, strange apparel, and voices of every scale, pass to the tribune; declaim, scream, growl, defy the representative of authority, sip some sugar and water, and descend to the bosom of the not very savoury equality and fraternity massed in the body of the hall.

Citizen Trasse draws upon himself a warning from the police commissioner by his sly allusions to the bladder.

Citizen Mallet blames Jules Simon for regarding poverty as an eternal necessity; and votes for Rochefort because he represents a social revolution.

Citizen Grunenwald remarks that the first number of the *Lanterne* made people laugh: the second showed Citizen Rochefort putting his finger on the wound. It was said that Rochefort was no orator—neither was Robespierre—at first.

Citizen Gaillard proposed to surround the Tuileries with a crowd of Lanternes to light the people within. The servants of the State were mere clerks of the people. “We pay the commissioner who is good enough to attend on this occasion”—quoth the Citizen, “and we will take care that he remains in attendance on us till eleven o’clock.” In his peroration, Citizen Gaillard denounced a *régime* that forbade a statue of Baudin, and permitted the erection of one to De Morny.

Citizen Maurice Joly observed that there was still a caste in France—as in ’89. There were

200,000 public servants, 1,200,000 soldiers, and 80,000 priests, all organised bodies in the way of a revolution.

Citizen Dombret explained that the second Republic had broken up, because men's ideas were not ripe. The Revolution was not prepared deliberately; but now the social movement is well matured, and the Revolution which is about to be made, will last.

Citizen Saugé must have guarantees from Rochefort; and he must be closely questioned. He must, above all, be asked how the workman is to obtain the legitimate fruit of his work. For himself, he was for the suppression of parasites. Every man should be a producer.

Citizen Domangeain had been asking himself whether the practice of the people's sovereignty corresponded with the principle of that sovereignty. In order to put the fact in harmony with the theory, the people, as free sovereign, should transact their own business, without the intervention of agents. Turning towards the reporter, the Citizen expressed his regret that the press had never ventilated this, the only absolutely democratic theory. It was humiliating for the sovereign to have to deliberate in confined, and often unhealthy, places.\* Spacious

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\* The sovereign held at least one meeting, by torchlight, in a quarry.

and splendid halls were wanted, where affairs of local, national, and universal interest might be discussed in common. It was illogical that the delegates of the people should impose laws on the people. They may make mistakes, or be corrupted. The fate of the sovereign is therefore in unsafe hands. The Citizen concluded—"I am a tailor, and I know how to make seams: and yet I commit blunders sometimes. But it is a much graver matter when blunders are made in laws than when they are cut in seams."

At this point the commissioner warned the meeting that the constitution must not be attacked.

Citizen Domangeain denounced the uselessness of "certain parasites who could not produce a lucifer-match"; and wound up with a declaration in favour of an elective police. It should be a glory in a man's life to be elected a policeman by his fellow-citizens. Citizen Millière sympathized with Citizen Domangeain, in his regrets that the sovereign people were obliged to meet in holes and corners, while there were so many unoccupied palaces. He agreed with the Citizen who had preceded him as to parasites. He who produces everything, enjoys nothing: he who produces nothing, enjoys the labours of others.

Rochefort must be good enough to understand that the applause of the people was addressed to the idea which he personified, and not to him

individually. The people must be on their guard against the *white blouses*. The authorities often hoped to deceive the people, by putting on their costume.

The Revolution consists of two things—viz., the destruction of the obstacles to progress, and progress itself. Rochefort has all that is requisite for the first part of the work, which we shall help him to carry out. He is the only candidate who accepts the principle of the “*mandat impératif*.” By his permanent communion with us, he will be the faithful exponent of the ideas which we shall develop in common. Direct government is practised in some parts of America, and in three Swiss cantons.

We must use the toleration of to-day and the liberty we shall have to-morrow, to study this new political machinery.

The orator suggests, pleasantly, that he and his friends should pull the clock to pieces, and then, set to work to study the principles of clockmaking. Meanwhile, the world must be content to have no account of time.

Citizen Giroux wants a deputy who will constantly plunge the peaceful sword of universal suffrage, into the thighs of personal government.

A phrase by Citizen Finet about the Pope, describing him as a representative of a God of peace and mercy, who has a Minister of War and an

executioner, draws down a warning from the commissioner of police.

Citizen Cavalier maintains that the oath taken by Rochefort doesn't count. He should like to see in the other three circumscriptions, candidates who had taken no oath (*insermentés*). Whereupon another police warning.

Citizen Peyrouton, opposing the candidature of M. Allou,\* wants to know whether men who have august clients do not neglect the briefs of the people. In any case, will they elect an independent speaker? Vote for Barbès; for we have to take a signal revenge for the 2nd of December, the bloody image of which wounds every conscience.

Loud cries of *Vive Barbès!* and the commissioner of police enters a warning!

We must open the gates of France to her great exiles: we must have another Republic.

The commissioner of police again interferes.

Citizen Brisson was of opinion that law costs ought to be abolished.

Citizen Glais-Bizoin said the octroi must be put down: the enemy must be starved out: the Emperor's civil list of twenty-five millions must be reduced to a salary of a president of the republic.

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\* Independent Liberal, advocate. He was Prince Jerome's counsel in the famous Patterson case.



Citizen Guillaumé blames the Left for not having questioned the Government as to certain rascals, two of whom sat in the Chambers with the Opposition ; who have been committing monstrous robberies for eighteen years, and have ruined eleven hundred thousand families. Elect Barbès, the Bayard of democracy.

Citizen Bibal supports Gent, on account of the socialist character of his candidature. The labour question should not and cannot be adjourned, as Citizen Arago thinks. Poverty must be suppressed if liberty is to be established ; and this by facilitating and developing production by the organization of credit and exchanges. No more Banks of France with a privilege arranged to fill the pockets of the shareholders. Credit should be gratuitous.

Citizen Serre will vote for the candidates who refuse to take the oath prescribed by law. He is in the presence of a constitution violated by the man who created it, and consequently annulled. Can you take an oath of allegiance to a constitution that exists no longer ?

Citizen Arago answers the charges against his socialism, by calling Ledru Rollin his master, by saying that he defended Barbès at the trial of the 15th of May ; and by the convincing fact that he *tutoyait* F. Pyat !

Citizen Humbert is not satisfied with Citizen Arago's position in social questions. Is it not

the worker who pays the taxes ? Education and the whole of society must be re-arranged on a basis of justice. What were the means which he (Arago) and others used in 1848 to accomplish this result ? With liberty as he describes and understands it, those who are perishing with hunger, will still perish. In fact, whenever the socialist party arises, the formal republicans never fail to make common cause with the royalists.

Citizen Lissagaray makes an elaborate oration in support of Rochefort. Thunders of applause, in the midst of which Citizen Rochefort puts his arms round the orator's neck, and kisses him warmly.

The president observes that he has copied a line from a poster. Citizen Rochefort is called the "*Candidat voyou*." Is the workman the *voyou* ?

Citizen Lardeur will prove by A plus B that the candidature of Rochefort is inopportune. He is met with shouts of "No algebra !"—The orator bids the meeting not to insult him, or he will leave the tribune. He repeats that Rochefort's candidature is inopportune—whereupon a deafening tumult. He manages to say that Rochefort has dipped his pen in gall to insult a woman (the Empress). Whereupon ironical cheers, and irrepressible clamour, amid which Citizen Lardeur disappears. Citizen Saugé holds the noise to be beneath the dignity of a sovereign assembly. Does the meeting wish to prove that it is not worthy of

liberty? It was more to Rochefort's interest to listen to his antagonist than to prevent him from speaking. The true sovereign is the man who can command himself. Order is re-established, but Citizen Lardeur declares that he has too much dignity to resume. A voice informs him that he has not the courage of his opinions.

"Are you, then, inquisitors?" asks Citizen Lardeur. He proceeds to assert that to send Rochefort to the Chamber would be a political crime—and ceases, amid hissing, ironical cheers, and tumult.

The candidate, Citizen Terme, is questioned by the irrepressible Citizen Millièrè, amid confusion and noise. Citizen Terme is in favour of calm discussion; and Citizen Millièrè declares that to obtain calmness, liberty must be secured. A voice observes that quite enough liberty exists for blackguards. Bravo and applause. The Citizen Millièrè declares himself a blackguard—and of the impatient blackguards. The Empire is to blame for the slackness of trade, and the want of work.

Citizen Pascal Duprat did not want the support of Crémieux. Crémieux at his age was in need of support, rather than in a position to give it. The speaker is interrupted by dissentients, and a general tumult. The noise at an end, he continues. Let Ledru Rollin return and make his voice heard—and his words of vengeance will be a bomb

thrown upon the Tuileries. Citizen Jourdan presents himself as a candidate. If the electors want a name they must pass their own : if they want a man, he is at their service. Citizen Pellerin requires a candidate who will make the Empire writhe in its last agony. We will not take the oath to one who, in the night, put a knife across our throat.

A closing incident. A citizen, although the legal hour is passed, insists on being heard. He must express his devotion and his readiness to sacrifice his head for the sovereign people—but he is borne off with the crowd, making wild gesticulations, amid general laughter.

At the doors there was a subscription for Gent's candidature : receipt, sixty centimes !

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#### GAVROCHE'S CANDIDATE.

November, 1869.

GAVROCHE is whistling across the street: staring from right to left: and he holds a whip in his hand. He has the air of one in authority over something. What is it? His dog? No; his candidate.

The docile creature comes panting to his feet, and looks up imploringly into his eyes, and is delighted when his master deigns to give him a

lesson in the art of fetching and carrying. The faithful animal rolls in the dust, plants his sagacious nose between his paws, and waits ; wags his merry tail, and craves another command ; for he is the most obedient of breathing things. He will plunge to the bottom of troubled waters, and fetch anything thence his master may command him. He will bark and bite to order. Gavroche is a severe proprietor : whimsically good-natured at times, but, as a rule, of iron will. When he keeps a dog, the animal can labour under no mistake as to the weight or length of its chain. There are people of easy temper who allow their domestic pets to run free, and have their own way. Gavroche is not among these. The thing which serves him is honoured in the humblest offices of his service, and must do them, and gratefully look up from the earth for any slight mark of approval his majesty may condescend to offer. A passing smile from Gavroche is of weightier value than a common king's ransom.

Whom have we here, accompanied by a roaring mob ? What citizen is this in a hackney cab, driving slowly from Belleville to the Faubourg Montmartre with a singing, shouting host of blouses, and bearded nondescripts ? Gavroche is taking his work home. That is all. The biped in the vehicle is Gavroche's. Gavroche beckons, and he wags his head as his proprietor requests.

He has been going through his paces in an electoral riding school, under the whip of the sovereign people. The *juge d'instruction* has not stuck to the prisoner Troppmann more closely than Gavroche, representative of King Blouse, has followed and questioned his messenger and slave. The creature arrived, out of the hands of the French Police, from the Belgian frontier ; tired in mind and body. But he was not to rest. His master took him like a horse out of a horse-box, and examined his points, and trotted him out. He was "in bad form," and at once he went down in the list. His oratorical paces were poor ; but he was extremely docile. A child might safely play with him.

Rocheftort in Paris—is Rocheftort on his downward course ? His head is turned. Can he really be the man of the situation—the Robespierre of the nineteenth century ; and does he hold, in truth, the flaming torch of holy vengeance ? He cannot realize the glory that is cast around him. The satirical paragraphist and political punster, raised from farce-writing to be chief figure in the most cultivated nation of the world ! The persifleur shaken out of his motley and folded in ermine ! The *Lanterne* made a guiding light among the nations ! He, in whose literary spasms there is not a single generous passage, is shot over the heads of the learned, good, and great men of his time, who have pondered the well-being of their

fellow-creatures through laborious lives ! The versatile insulter of the Sovereign, who has mixed poison in a hundred little cups ; who has drawn every conceivable form of sword and dagger and knife for the throat of one enemy ; the acrobat of the multitude, promoted from a square of carpet and a bye-street, to be the judge and the law-maker !

Brought before the sovereign people at a public meeting, the caustic pen shook in the young man's hand. He was expected to consume everything repugnant to Gavroche, with flame from his forked tongue. Now was the Empire to tremble to its foundations : the Senate to feel the damp sweat of death ; the employer to know that the era of wage-paying was closed ; and the workman to mark the golden dawn of universal mastership.

The uproarious crowd hushed, prepared to hang, as the bee on the flower, upon the honey of his eloquent lip—with adoration as passionate as that of Lord Lytton's Pauline—and as evanescent and charged with selfishness. To use a Swedish proverb—he who had risen like a star, fell like a pancake. Rochefort was no orator. He had prepared a little offensive speech, with his *Lanterne* points dotted about it—and this he hung out again and again. Gavroche did his best to appear contented. Robespierre, he said, failed at first. His candidate was overworked—and so he took him home in a cab,

with the customary noise—and permitted him to go to bed. But Rochefort's sleep was watched; he must snore only with the permission of the people.\* The morrow found the humble creature of the sovereign people, dazed—and inflated too. He had caught sight of his new state clothes, and was burning to put them on. He tried a strut. He made an attempt at a majestic toss of the head. Whereupon Gavroche approached him authoritatively, and observed :

“This shouting about your carriage; these resounding cheers in the too narrow halls of the people; and this general cry of *Vive Rochefort!*—mean nothing for *you*. The little boys of London cheer round about the straw-stuffed figure of Guy

\* Quand je m'dors, quand je m'éveille,  
Sans cesse un monsieur distingué  
Est là tout près qui me surveille  
En qualité de délégué.

\* \* \* \*

Lorsque pour me coucher je rentre,  
Le soupçon dans mon cœur jaillit,  
Je m'étale sur le ventre,  
Et je regarde sous mon lit.

\* \* \* \*

“Personne ! soufflons la chandelle  
Et dormons. Crac, j'entends du bruit,  
Et vois mon délégué fidèle  
Qui sort de ma table de nuit !”

ALBERT MILLAUD.



Fawkes, which they burn in the evening. I have not made up my mind when I shall burn you : but it will very much depend on your behaviour while I choose to wheel you about in my barrow. A turn of my wrist, and you are in the mud.

“ Ah ! you thought the sovereign people were applauding you ! Learn, rash and vain young man, that His Majesty cheers only—himself. It has pleased him to put you up as a symbol of reckless and spiteful disorder, and so long as it may suit him to keep you in that place of honour, I shall trouble you to be humble, subservient, and prone to the dust. But, before His Majesty puts you into his livery, he will question you.”

Citizen Rochefort respectfully bowed his head, and was led back to the presence of the sovereign people. He would do everything. It was unnecessary to offer the least explanation of his own views. He was the most obedient, humble servant of King Mob. Elected, he would have no will—no thought of his own. Weekly he would spread his cloak upon the earth, and beseech His Majesty to walk over it. He would hire the school-room wherein the sovereign people would give him weekly lessons in the part he was to act in the *Corps Législatif*, while the Corps was suffered to exist, pending direct legislation, by the people, for the people. To every question put to him by atoms of His Majesty the Mob, he had one answer. He was the passive in-

strument of the sovereign million. He was the Barbary organ : His Majesty was sole operator at the handle.\*

His wicked enemies had said that he had received a pencil-case from a prince of the House of Orleans ; and that when he went to London to throw his mantle over Ledru Rollin and bring him back to Paris, he had seen the Orleans family. He repudiated these charges. His reverent eyes had ever rested on the heroic proportions of King Mob. He kissed the hem of the blouse. He was the dear brother of the eloquent tailor who had just spoken, and words could not express his feelings towards bootmaker Gaillard, who was good enough to divert his mind awhile from upper soles to the salvation of the country. Had he not shown his detestation of the Imperialists—of the Bonaparte, in a hundred stinging sarcasms? Everything which Citizen Gavroche disliked should cease ; or, if they would

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\* At a meeting in the Rue Doudeauville, Citizen Emanuel, having said that Ledru Rollin would not return to France because he knew a ship was kept in readiness to transport him to Cayenne, was asked for proofs. He answered, "How can I have proofs? I am not His Majesty." Murmurs. Several voices, "There is no majesty except that of the people."

The President : "It is evidently by mistake that the speaker allowed this expression, most unbecoming in a popular assembly, to escape him."

permit him the dazzling glory, he would descend into the street.

"Ascend," the quiet citizen growls.

Will he put down misery ; erase pauperism from the list of human evils ; make every man his own master ; put his heel upon every parasite, that is, upon every human creature who does not produce something ; as a deputy, cast himself into the skin of Citizen Gavroche ; having taken an oath of fidelity to the Empire, break it at the earliest opportunity, never ceasing, in addition, to call the Chief of the State, the Perjured One of December ; hug every ism that wears a blouse, and never cease from the slanders by which he has risen to the proud position of messenger and footman to King Mob ?

Citizen Rochefort swallows the morsels with the air of a man who is assisting at a banquet cooked by Gouffé. He incorporates all, and is ready for more. Ledru Rollin would not come back with him ; therefore, he said, Ledru was not on a level with his mission.

Ledru was ready with his pen, but not with his skin. He would write a fiery proclamation that would give the centuries the lie, and order the world to try back, like a clumsy girl at her piano. Ledru was music-master to the spheres, you should be pleased to know, and not very proud of his pupils. When Citizen Gavroche sent his forward,

spiteful boy to London, to lead the exile home, the veteran's scorn and rage were unbounded—so report said. And no wonder. Take two iconoclasts. Would he who had shivered the Venus de Medici to dust, and had lopped the limbs from Apollo, hearken to the counsel of a beginner, who had merely tripped up an image-boy in the streets?

When a man rises, as Rochefort rose, he finds at his heels a pertinacious pack of writers who turn over his heap of antecedents with their hooks, and gather into their baskets every item that will tell to his disadvantage. His Orleans pencil-case (a school-boy gift) has gone the round of the press. But it was put in the shade by his attendance at the funeral of Queen Marie Amélie.

The sovereign people requested their slave to explain how it was that he attended the obsequies of Louis Philippe's widow. Rochefort replied that *happening* to be in London at the time, he was "fortuitously" in the crowd of the curious. He reckoned without the hook and basket of the *chroniqueur*.

Citizen Rochefort, in days when he little dreamed that he would be permitted to wear the chains of the sovereign people, wrote a book, which he entitled *La Grande Bohême*. At page thirty-five of that interesting work, the *Figaro* is good enough to remind him, the following sentence may be read :

"*I have just returned from London, whither I*

*journeyed in the company of several honourable people, to pay our last duty to an honest woman," &c. &c.*

Having passed from *La Grande Bohême* to *La Basse Bohême*, Citizen Rochefort finds the sentence just a little embarrassing. But he will get up a daily organ of his own,\* and then we shall see who will have the best of it in the rival pillories.

With a daily paper to direct, and provide with lampoons; and a sovereign people to serve—taking His Majesty's orders weekly, from a throne to be paid for out of his own pocket—Rochefort's work is cut out largely for him.

His reward will be—the unbounded ingratitude of his masters. He may die grand cross of the Inestimable order of the Sabot, and be honoured with a "secular funeral," but if he should live the allotted span of human life, his shouting constituents of to-day who shall have survived their political messenger, will be impatient with their evening paper for wasting a paragraph on him.

He will have been long ago—

Embalmed in hate and canonized by scorn.

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### CITIZEN FELIX PYAT'S MANIFESTO.

November, 1869.

THE crowning deed of the days of disorder, of tumult, sugar-and-water drinking and accusations ;

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\* *La Marseillaise.*

of society-making and marring; of mad propositions for the regeneration of the world by its most degenerate creatures; of sadness over folly that will not die out, and of vanity that will fight and kill rather than remain obscure—the crowning deed of the days of shame, was the production of Citizen Félix Pyat's manifesto. I am not ready to say one word against the man. With his private life I have no concern. I am not at any trouble about his sincerity or his insincerity. I take him at his own value. I estimate him from his own lips. I convict him by his own admissions. I do not say he is a fool, charged with an overweening sense of his personal merits and importance: I exhibit his folly. He leaves me no room for argument. How do you approach a man whom you find capering about a gunpowder magazine with lighted squibs in his hand? The magazine will be scattered in the air presently, but,—you will have seen him—that is *his* sole concern.

Citizen Pyat wants to know what has become of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity during the last three months?

He begins with Liberty, which he defines as the right of man to exercise all his physical, moral, and mental faculties, within limits prescribed by his fellows, or approved by them—a definition which applies to the most meagre form of constitutional government—even to personal government, when

this rests on universal suffrage. He proceeds to review the application of the principle. Paris serves his turn, as the capital of France—Hugo says the capital of the world. He supposes the arrival of a young man of fair abilities, bent on earning his living by the exercise of his faculties. To begin with, he is stopped at the city gates, is questioned—perhaps searched—before he passes the *octroi*. Nobody may enter, even with a lark for a pie, without paying the dues to liberty and the principles of '89. He pays and passes into the city. What will he do? Citizen Pyat is most anxious not to overstate the case. He has a little money; he can drive; he buys a horse and cab, and is about to ply for hire. "Prohibited," the police cry, "driving is a monopoly accorded to certain privileged persons by liberty and the principles of '89."

He is a good walker. "Oh, I am honest," he says; "I will carry people's letters. The post is a paying concern, and I will get a good business by under-bidding it." "Prohibited on principle," the police shout: "this is another Government monopoly."

"Ah," the young man exclaims, "I have some ideas of chemistry. Tobacco is a thing of general necessity. Government makes money by selling it bad and dear. I will sell good tobacco, and at a cheaper rate than Government." "Prohibited!" is the reply of the police: "this is another Government

monopoly." Then a brilliant idea strikes Citizen Pyat's model young man. He will manufacture gunpowder. "Gunpowder, rash youth! only the Government manufactures gunpowder: uses and abuses it. It is more than a monopoly; it is a double crime, a conspiracy. Trebly prohibited."

Citizen Pyat is addressing his constituents at his ease—so he proceeds:—

The devil! the principles of '89 try the temper. The young man requests to know "what is permitted, since you answer me always 'Prohibited!'" I am intelligent, educated. I read well: I write better. I will become a journalist." First warning: you must deposit caution-money. "A pamphleteer, then?" The stamp. "Printer?" If master, a patent; if workman, a *livret*. "A hawker." A *visa*. What remains? Let me think again. "A publican?" A licence. "A tradesman?" The patent. "Professor?" A diploma. "A stock-broker, advocate, solicitor, notary, sheriff's officer?" You must buy your place. "Porter, shoeblack, then?" You must have a medal.

Citizen Pyat's exposition of his political views so far is received with great applause. Encouraged, as well he may be when such crazy vapouring is cheered, he goes on:—

In short, there is nothing free except the police—in the name of liberty and the principles of '89. At last the young man, at the end of his tether,



and desperate, thinks about destroying himself. He will put an end to his life, and make his own coffin. The last warning and monopoly of Government turns up.

Happily, he is only twenty and he is a conscript. He is saved! He is condemned to nine years of hard principles and military liberty: he is '89 in uniform. This is Liberty's last word.

Citizen Pyat's hearers are in ecstasies. Such is liberty, the returned exile says, such is human prosperity in the France; in the Paris which has made three revolutions for this first of rights. Everything is forbidden, and the rest is allowed. Paris cannot even elect her mayor. We pass to the second principle—Equality. Citizen Pyat is resolved upon a striking illustration.

Have you, citizens, who have the unspeakable pleasure of listening to me—Solon in a red cap, ever observed an organ, or member, of the human body, taking advantage wantonly of the rest of the organs or members? For example, in the hand, one finger taking all the substance of the other fingers—and becoming big and fat like a rich man, amid the others, lean like the poor? If chance should make such a development, it would be a monstrosity. Nature, in fact, by a wise law of equilibrium, distributes to each member the strength proportioned to its functions. This is known in physiology as the balance of the organs; and it

should be known in socialism as the law of partition, of equity, of justice—in one word, of equality.

Alas ! this was received by Citizen Pyat's auditory with loud cheers. Shall we wonder at anything that may follow. Hereupon follow the citizen candidate's deductions.

Where, therefore, is the equality between a Rothschild and a rag-picker ? Where is the equality between fortune and education on one side, and misery and ignorance on the other ? Between the coat and the blouse ; the master and the workman, labour that produces everything and enjoys nought, and idleness that produces nothing and enjoys everything ? Where lies the equality between the two castes—the one above, the other underneath ? Where is the equality between the son of the rich man, born as the English proverb says, with a silver spoon in his mouth, baptized in tepid water, putting the world under contribution for his food, clothing, housing, and education—with his first cry ; growing in hereditary luxuries and accumulations ; his fire in the winter and his ice in the summer ; with straw under his windows when he is ill, dying as he was born, in down—embalmed and blessed, and put away in marble:—where is the equality, not between him, but between his horses, groomed and wrapped in blankets,—and the child of the poor, the child of labour, born in the asylum,

living in the workshop, dying in the hospital, dissected in the amphitheatre,—used all his life, from his birth unto his death :—as workman, giving his sweat ; as soldier, his blood ; dead, his body to science that the rich man may be cured ; and so, turned to account after his last agony. Behold Equality's last word !

Citizen Pyat made a sensation with this period—and was encouraged to continue the same line of calm and just and salutary reasoning.

How many poor go to make one rich man ? Almost as many as there must be subjects to make a king. So long as, according to the law of equilibrium and of justice, the workman does not enjoy these three rights : 1, the right over the whole of that which he produces, without drawback ; 2, the means of producing without capital ; 3, the liberty to produce without patent or licence—there will not be the shadow of equality. There will be two castes, masters and slaves.

Let us turn to Fraternity.

Fraternity is disposed of in a trice. The master excludes the brother. Love one another ! How can a man love his master ? Our master is our enemy. The wolf is not the father of the lamb, and if he loves him, it is to eat him. These sentences of Citizen Pyat's were received with “ approving laughter ”—*rires approbateurs*.

He asked, what is the fraternity of the cannibal

—of the sweater, who is the regulated cannibal? What is the fraternity of France and Europe, armed to the teeth? The fraternity of the bayonet and the guillotine? The fraternity of the soldier and the priest, who slays and who damns? The fraternity, not of bread, but of lead? The fraternity which gags the tongue of labour, and fires the throat of artillery? The fraternity of Judas and of Cain? The fraternity of December and of Cayenne? of Paris and of Rome? of Ricamarie and of Aubin?

This burst yielded Citizen Pyat a round of enthusiastic cheers. He had more to say in the same convincing, sober, and rational strain. He compared Mazas to the Bastille, whereupon his frenzied audience roared that they would pull down the one like the other. I give a final touch of Citizen Pyat's justice:—as summed up in his "last word of Fraternity."

Before the Revolution, he said, there were twenty-seven executioners—twenty-seven too many!—and to-day there are ninety-nine!

The infamous inference suggested by this will give the reader a very good idea of the kind of gentlemen France would have to govern her, if, for her sins, she should be subjected, even for four-and-twenty hours, to the domination of the Reds!

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## FRANÇOIS-VICTOR HUGO'S ARGUMENT.

November, 1869.

AFTER Citizen Pyat comes François-Victor Hugo—to wind up the follies of his party with a scream at everything that is opposed to him and his friends; and to give the French public, who are not of “the sovereign people” of the Belleville meetings, an idea of the kind of persons who would have the destinies of France in their hands if the red cap could be planted upon a pole over King Victor Hugo in the Hall of Marshals—transformed into the Hall of the Mob. Citizen François-Victor turns back his sleeve, has a fresh bottle of gall opened for the occasion, seizes a quill from the bundle selected from the backs of the fretfullest of porcupines for the *Rappel* offices—and, enveloped in red curtains, lays lustily about him. Bees are sent humming under his nose to keep up the fury:—and the inkstand is an eagle—and the gall is purple-tinted!

He is off!

The Bonapartist writers get their *esprit* out of the fish-fag's catechism, their courtesy from Père Duchêne—their honour from Basile. No epithet is repugnant to them. They mock at equity and truth. They have scorn for sacrifices; they meet disinterestedness with raillery, and nag at adversity. They associate heroism with scoundrelism—Barbès with Troppmann. They give the lie to fact, and a

slap in the face to evidence. They hold their sides laughing at the grave. And this is how Bonapartist journals endeavour to mislead public opinion.

But these are mere preliminary flourishes—trials of the wrist, and eye, and nerve. Citizen François-Victor now sets to work in downright earnest, stimulated by a prodigious bumble-bée, buzzing under the very nose of the thirty-five-millionth part of the sovereign people.

The Bonapartists cry, in God's name, what should we do if the providential being who represents absolutism were to disappear. Commerce would be at a stand-still, property would cease; the poor, relieved from the presence of gendarmes, would fall on the rich. Communism would triumph. The scaffold would arise—and terror reign again. Universal bankruptcy, civil war, fratricidal struggle, return to barbarism! *Tableau!*

Citizen François-Victor is good enough to warn the Government prints (and all are for the Government, according to this quiet citizen, who are not ready to scatter the whole political fabric to the winds) that the system of frightening peaceable citizens with the prospect of chaos and the Reds, is worn out. The Government papers of the Restoration played the same game. To-day's justification of the *coup d'état* was yesterday's justification of the *Ordonnances*. The epithets now applied to the *Irreconcilables* were then directed to Manuel.

Benjamin Constant, Lafayette, Casimir Périer, and Béranger.

On the 29th of July, 1830, men saw what the predictions of the Ultras were worth. What did the omnipotent people do after the taking of the Tuileries? Did they seize upon property? They shot the thieves. Did they show respect for persons? They became their own police. Did they break into the banks and rifle the Treasury? They placed ragged sentinels at the gates. Did they put their vanquished enemies to death? They protected the flight of Charles X. and the royal family; they gave a safe conduct to Madame de Polignac, and freedom to the Swiss prisoners. They pardoned the guiltiest. On the 3rd of August, 1830, the *Journal des Débats* was lost in admiration of the calm that prevailed, with 70,000 citizens of all classes—some very poor indeed—under arms. Eight days sufficed to pass from despotism to liberty.

Citizen François-Victor uses just so much of the Revolution of 1830 as he finds convenient to the series of jerks which he calls his argument. He blunders, however, in the very opening of his illustrations and comparisons. Who are the men of disorder, in 1869, comparable, except for conservative purposes, with Benjamin Constant, Casimir Périer, and Béranger? Moreover, the acts and theories which were repudiated by the Revolutionists

of twenty-nine years ago, are justified and advocated by the socialist talkers of 1869—who want to see capital without interest, and labour without capital.

But Citizen François-Victor has a flail as heavy for the back of the Government of July as he had for that of Charles X. He blames everything done in the way of government, from '93 to 1869. He complains that the writers who supported the Government of Louis Philippe after the Revolution, charged the people of 1830 "with the terrible necessities of '93"; and hinted that they were hoping for the return of the Reign of Terror, bankruptcy, and the guillotine. They ingeniously exaggerated the quarrels of the Radical party, and deduced from them their constant assertion that their advance to power would be the ruin of France. They called upon the Radicals to learn how to govern themselves, to begin with. Let Proudhon come to an agreement with Fourier, and Cabet with St. Simon.

This advice to the Reds, and caution to the entire public, holds certainly good now—when the party of disorder is without a single guiding principle of political action—and its meetings exhibit "a general union of total dissent."

Citizen François-Victor passes nimbly to 1848. Again Democracy was victorious, and orderly. Paris, according to the Legitimist organ *L'Union*, put France and humanity under a debt of gratitude.



Ledru-Rollin, from the ministry of the Interior, directs the departmental prefects to watch over the public peace. The Paris workmen are exhorted to respect property, and to avoid every description of excess, and to remember that the nations are watching them. "You have deserved the admiration of the world by your irresistible courage and your generosity. Learn to merit its continuance by your wisdom, and by being the examples of every virtue." Thus Cabet wrote in *Le Populaire*.

"Respect property" is the cry of the leader of the Communists. An old conspirator, Caussidière, commands the police. Guinard, another old conspirator, is at the head of the staff of the National Guard. The Provisional Government was formed in a few hours. By what miracle? By a compromise between the extreme factions of the Radical party. The socialist and the democrat, the old republican and the newly converted, the contributor to the *Réforme* and the contributor to the *National*, sit together. Flocon near Marrast, Louis Blanc near Garnier-Pagès, Ledru-Rollin near Crémieux, Lamartine, gentleman, near Albert, workman.

And thus demagogues answered those who said they were incapable of harmonious action. These, the despised of yesterday, were saluted by the embassies, the robed magistracy, the clergy. Before them stood the mitres of the bishops and the plumes of the marshals. Lord Normanby daily offered the

friendship of England. Louis Napoleon prayed them to accept the expression of his entire devotion, and submitted to them the abandonment of the Empire.

Citizen François-Victor is now warm in his harness, and breaks into a gallop—quite unconscious of the mischief he is doing. All this flighty and frothy description is so much argument against another trial. If, with infinitely higher and nobler patriots than France could gather now out of the Republican, socialist, and communist ranks, the Republic went by the board into a sea of blood in 1848, when commercial confidence was maintained within sight of the barricades\* ; what hope would there be for a régime with perhaps a comic writer, repudiated by Ledru as a droll *gamin*, for chief—and the Hugo family to give ballast to Republican statesmanship?

Citizen François-Victor says that monarchy fell in 1830 and again in 1848—and yet society remained unshaken : and therefore it will not tumble to pieces should the crown go once more to-morrow. But what do the enemies of liberty care for “ the logic of facts ” ? Now in 1830 the throne did not fall, to begin with. One gentleman vacated it, and another took his seat—as rapidly as an empty place in a popular omnibus is filled : and, in

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\* On the 26th of February, 1848, the Bank discounted to the extent of seven million of francs.

1849, society, in order to save itself from all the wisdom and all the virtues of which the Republic was the dazzling exemplar, was even content with a military dictatorship. Society ran away from Ledru-Rollin, and took the arm of the piau-piau—the unlettered representative of Order.

But Citizen François-Victor is tired. Citizen Charles Hugo relieves him—and throws fire and fury into the last words which are to inspire the people on their march to the electoral urns.

The Abusive Press! Citizen Charles Hugo has an excellent text. No bull's gaze ever fell upon a redder rag. The Citizen proceeds to show that the *Rappel* is not abusive!

He opens on M. Emile de Girardin, because he accepts accomplished facts, and will direct his attention from the *Coup d'État* to the present Government of France. If the Empire governed in harmony with his interests and logically, M. de Girardin would submit it to the historian as an admirable model, and would be surprised to see him remain severe. This is because, in politics, M. de Girardin is the enemy of faults rather than crimes.

And now for “the abusive Press”—M. de Girardin's very proper description of the Hugo and kindred organs. Citizen Charles Hugo starts with a definition. To abuse is to calumniate. Do we calumniate, do we abuse the Empire?

Is it a calumny, or a truth, to say that on the 2nd of December, 1851, the President of the Republic, after having sworn before God and man to be faithful to the Republic, perjured himself before God and man? If it be the truth, can it be a calumny? A series of Coup d'État questions follow, in which the Emperor is a spoliator of the public Treasury, a corruptor of the army, a defiler of justice, a wholesale slaughterman of men! After every charge, wrought in the accepted Hugo style, follows the question—Is this the truth? And if it be the truth, is it a calumny?

Are the “abominable proclamations” of Maupas and St. Arnaud, efforts of Republican imagination? Do Citizen Charles Hugo and his friends falsify history, in recalling to men's minds the brigades of Canrobert, Marulaz, and the rest; sweeping down and storming Paris from noon till five o'clock on the 4th of December, in the name of Louis Bonaparte? Have they merely imagined the list of the 191 victims, admitted by the prefecture of police? Are they the dramatists of this tragedy, the forgers of this carnage? Do they invent the dead of the Morgue, of the cité Bergère, of the boulevards, of the doorsteps, upon the staircases, in beds and alcoves? Does the common grave of Montmartre cemetery cry to them that they lie?

Citizen Charles Hugo is of warmer blood than his brother. “Can it be said that in raising all

these spectres before the tribunal of public opinion, we produce false witnesses ?" The simple reader would imagine that French Republicans never scratched a single citizen's finger ; and would feel themselves for ever dishonoured by a bloody nose.\*

Citizen Charles is as great with marks of interrogation, as his father is with points of admiration. "Has he invented Cayenne and its horrors ; solitary graves in the wilderness ; political convicts in the hulks ; Jules Mist and Charles Ribeyrolles, dead thousands of miles away from France ? These are truths as clear as the sun of Lambessa. If the accusing tyrants of crimes is to be regarded as calumny, history will be but one long slander. Pascal, Voltaire, Camille Desmoulins, Chateaubriand are but purveyors of insult. Innocent Nero has been calumniated. The human conscience should discredit Juvenal, and renounce Tacitus."

Citizen Charles Hugo then imagines the answer of all who have the audacity, and incur the moral reproach of not being of his opinion. "All this happened eighteen years ago !" Who remembers the 3rd of December, 1851, to-day ? Baudin is

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\* According to the statement of the Republican Prudhomme, the first revolution cost 1,022,351 lives, exclusive of the victims of the Republican wars. The guillotine fell upon 18,603 necks, including those of 1,467 wives of labourers and of artisans.

dead\* and the Coup d'État is buried. Leave us in peace. The citizens who make this reply, are also supplied by the writer's accommodating imagination. They are journalists from the shop of the Barber of Seville : complaisant pedagogues and comedians of importance : authors of the operetta of the Coup d'État, and moralists of the Empire. Figaros in fine, Trissotins, professors of Bonapartism at the St. Arnaud Lyceum !

These cry to the dead—to livid corpses—to skeletons scattered here, there, and everywhere, in every common grave of every necropolis, and under every sky—"you bother us."

The Citizen is master of the art of piling up the agony.

You bother us, Pauline Roland, patriot ; Pauline Roland, the martyr ; Pauline Roland, the transported ; Pauline Roland, the great dead one ! You bother us, Louise Julien, the prisoner of December, the proscribed of France, the expelled from Brussels, the dying one of London, the dead one of Jersey ! Ye bother us, ye dead of the Boulevard Montmartre, and thou gamin, with marbles in thy pocket and three bullets in thy head ! etc., etc. You bother

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\* The candidature of Barbès recalled to the public the grave of Lieutenant Drouineau, shot dead by this republican on the 15th May, 1849, before the Hôtel de Ville. Barbès denies the impeachment : but the officer was shot, and, certes, not by a Bonapartist.

us, set of dead ones of the Rue ~~Taitbout~~. Guillotined of Clamecy, you **bother us**. Widows in black, **your white hairs** bother us. Several heads that *will* speak, you bother us !

Wholesome food this, supplied by Citizen Charles Hugo, for the education of the sovereign people ! The reader has perceived how well the writer defends his party against M. de Girardin's charge that it is abusive.

The Red-hot citizen's opponents are not mealy-mouthed. Indeed, tameness cannot be charged upon either side. The Republican writers have been baptized farceurs, cowards, Jocrisses, Polichinelles, and break-neck politicians. A writer, not of the *Rappel* way of thinking, calls "Psitt !" to Rochefort, as to a poodle whose hind quarters he is about to shave.

But if the mud used on both sides could be weighed, Rochefort's supply would out-balance all the hundred scribbling opponents of the kingdom of the people, of the empire of topsy-turvy, have thrown.

It is, however, sagacious on the part of the Hugos to be the first to complain. Citizen Charles says his enemies have long ago ceased to argue. They answer a hostile observation with—one in the eye—"pan dans l'œil." Count your bones that I may crush them—to this is polemical warfare reduced—to official boxing, and

devoted pugilism. "The Imperial profile bites the nose of the Revolution."

Citizen Charles Hugo concludes by saying it is the official and moderate press that is violent. For my own part, I find in the evening, that, to turn from the *Rappel* to, say, the *Figaro*, the *Gaulois*, the *Liberté*; is like passing within pier-heads after a storm. I turn down my collar and compose myself for a little quiet.

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#### FELIX PYAT ON THE SOVEREIGN PEOPLE.

November, 1869.

CITIZEN Félix Pyat took an opportunity on the 18th of November, of supplementing his directions to the working men of Paris, on the nearest way to an industrial anarchy. He had endeavoured to fill their heads with impracticable ideas about liberty, equality, and fraternity; but he was good enough to repair to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, in order to provide the skulls that might not be quite full, with a padding of destructive doctrines—the application of which to daily life might give his party a hope of making their twenty-four hours of power, forty-eight.

He began by telling the workmen who were unfortunately present to listen to him, that liberty was never given: it must be seized. Their representatives, he said, had deceived them.



“Represent yourselves,” cried Citizen Pyat. “Be what you are—sovereigns! Two sovereignties are before you—the sovereignty of all, and the sovereignty of one—Monarchy and Republic. One holds a sword, the other wields a tool: one destroys, the other produces. Let the sovereignty of workmen be represented by working men. Can you imagine sheep represented by a butcher’s bull-dog? No! Then why have you complained of being bitten, torn, shorn, and eaten? Emancipate yourselves from the innocence of the flock. Choose the best among yourselves, and give them the *mandat impératif*.\* Bind them, not to the butcher by an oath, but by a contract to the people. Make them your clerks, not your masters! Command them to let the authorities know that you pretend to keep your own wool and skin for the future. A sovereign does as he pleases. He chooses, discharges, and commands his agents at his will: if not, he is no sovereign. Observe: is Bonaparte the master of Baroche, or is Baroche the master of Bonaparte?” After the general laughter had subsided upon this claptrap, Citizen Pyat proceeded to ask, whether the people should be Gambetta’s master, or Gambetta the people’s? Gambetta, it should be noted,

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\* Binding the candidate to consult his constituents for every vote and detail of his political actions—to take his orders weekly—like Citizen Rochefort.

is what we should call an advanced Liberal : but not an immediate root-and-branch man of Pyat's stamp. "The world is upside down : turn it up," quoth the Citizen, elated with his hit about Bonaparte and Baroche. Then a magnificent burst of cheers.

The nineteenth century, is the century of the people : '48 was the revolution of the people. The epoch of steam and electricity, of human progress, is the epoch of the people. In the past, the two Aristocrats, war and robbery : in the present the Democrats—work and peace. In the middle ages, the reign of priest and noble : in the eighteenth century, the bourgeois : in the nineteenth century the coming of the people ! The people !—the green and living plant : the barbarian giving a fresh youth to the world.

Traders retired from business to their country seats, make stomach and die. The aristocracy made their fortunes by Gallic wars ; they retired, weakened, and were lost. The bourgeois has reached his country-house, and, if not dead, is very old. The people alone are young. Only the people work : only the people have strength, life, thought, action, moral sense and common sense, brain and heart, the spirit of sacrifice and devotion. And as the middle class sinks, the people rise in political life.

Citizen Pyat has his examples ready.

What are these congresses of workmen, and these organs of labour, defining and proclaiming every social question in the two hemispheres—from Bâle to New York? What is Berezowski dying for Poland?—a workman! What are Barrett, Allen, O'Farell, dying for Ireland? Workmen! What is President Lincoln, dying for the slaves? A workman! What is Juarez, deliverer of the Republic? A workman! At this, the *Rappel* informs its readers, the hall resounded with acclamations—and the orator was brought to a standstill, by the fervour of his admirers. Pyat now turned to the dark side of the medal. What is Prim, taking a lesson in December in the Louvre? what is his professor? what are the members of the Senate, the Corps Legislatif, the Council of State, who crush the people \* under taxes, and military and other services; who double their responsibilities, pare their rights, and increase their debts; who dishonour, despoil, and shoot Labour; crowning bankruptcy by defeat, the wonders of Rome by the trophies of Mexico, and the trophies of Ricamarie by the wonders of Aubin? What are all these

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\* Between Citizen Pyat and M. Thiers a most instructive contrast might be set up. In the first days of June, electioneering busybodies besought M. Thiers to appear at the meetings of the people. He answered: "I am always ready to present myself before the people, but prove to me that your gattlerings *are* the people."

accomplices, who have been too faithful to their oath given to the empire, to egotism, and to death? Are they workmen?

And yet they call themselves democrats and workmen. Builders! What works are these Tuileries, Luxembourg, and Palais-Bourbon! How well labour is represented here, and how well it is done! What an edifice they are building, journeymen and apprentices. Talk to us of master-mason Rouher, of journeyman Forcade, and of apprentice Ollivier: without reckoning the architect, still white—or red—all over, with the mortar of December!

The workmen cheered—as flattered men will cheer their flatterer.

Observe to the poet Close, that there is a deeper, subtler, nobler significance in his verse than in any numbers which have been musical in men's ears this century, and he will probably believe you. Should we blame the satisfied—the misled versifier—or the flatterer? Then what should be said to Pyat telling an audience of working men to topple over everything, and rebuild from the foundations with their own hands—leaving no whisper of a voice to any save of their own order. The middle class is to be permitted a peaceable decline, on the condition that every bourgeois will work with the working-man. The workman has corns on his hands—the bourgeois on his conscience. “No more corns!” is Pyat's shout. And then he stigmatizes the best men of

the Left as *bourgeois*; and in the face of their protest, proclamation, and programme (a radical one, if radicalism means anything) declares that they have deceived the people, and killed their own conscience. The people are to have nothing whatever to do with "the constitution of the perjurer,"—nor with the dark passages of the Coup d'État. "The people work in the daylight!" The Emperor is presently called "the night workman of December": and the parliamentary Opposition, who have steadily advanced Imperial institutions to a degree of liberty that tolerates language which would land an Englishman in Newgate, is slandered as a purveyor of shreds and patches of reform—in brief of *arlequins*\*—made up of political scraps.

"They carve the Revolution for you," Citizen Pyat concludes—"like a chicken—offering you leg or head, but keeping the wings for him to whom the oath of allegiance is taken, and who has the civil list. Now, I say to you plainly—people can carve best for themselves. Have the whole joint."

All programmes—all reforms are contained in this one word—*Revolution*!

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\* I should explain, that the "arlequin" is a dish of scraps, which the poorest buy in the lowliest *barrière* restaurants, as the Grande Californie. Such Harlequins would make many faces merry in England, if English purveyors for the poor had the science to prepare them.

Now, Citizen Pyat is the Emperor's best friend. It is the men who have served him who have been his bitterest enemies.

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## PRÉVOST-PARADOL IN ENGLAND.

November, 1869.

I WAS discussing in mid-November, with an accomplished student of history, a writer of high critical authority in England, and a close observer of French political life, as well as a painstaking reader of French literature—the singular figure which M. Prévost-Paradol was then making, as a literary man, in England.

Said my friend, "Had Prévost-Paradol been born an Englishman, and had he followed the exact English parallel of his literary career in France, he would be unknown, without fortune, and without a future." My friend, hereupon, ran through a list of accomplished English scholars who, he said, "had spent their whole vital force, learning and genius in the service of the public, in the leading journals and reviews; and had died absolutely unknown beyond their own literary and social circle, having been, to the end, merely well-paid journey-men."

He proceeded with a contrast between literary and political life in England and France; and, it seemed to me, showed conclusively that M. Prévost-Paradol

was fortunate as *homme de lettres*, in having been born a Frenchman.

“To begin with, the average French *littérateur* is better paid, while those who have gained a reputation—even a second or third rate one—are men of fortune—if they avoid the habits of the spendthrift. There are a dozen—a score—of journalists in Paris who live sumptuously, have property, keep their country places, give fashionable receptions, and rank with the best society in the capital. Take Rochefort as an instance. As an English comic writer he would have commanded some five or six guineas weekly. Take Sainte Beuve, and compare him with any Edinburgh or Quarterly Reviewer. Did you see his funeral? I knew him. He fought a very hard fight in the beginning; and at the end he could not make the sums realized by the purveyors of *cocotte* literature; but he was on a proud eminence in the esteem of all classes. The prince next the throne would lunch and dine with him, and be glad of his acquaintance. And he died Senator! He might have been much more, had he pleased. Paris is the centre of intellectual Europe; therefore the intellectual men at the centre obtain a consideration which spreads far and wide: therefore their breasts are covered with stars, and, when they travel, they are welcome in the palaces of the great. M. Prévost-Paradol had the dot exactly over the *i* when he described the French

philosopher, or, more properly, the philosophic Frenchman, in his recent estimate of the social condition of France.\* *Le plaisir de l'esprit*, which is the dominant passion of all classes of Frenchmen, naturally carries the *homme d'esprit*, very far in this Paris. He is master. He may aim at any post—the highest. His influence may be for good, or for bad ; but none can deny it, nor be rid of it. The popular meetings have shown, of late, the least lettered classes to be charged with this intuitive feeling for the intellectual. The fool is their abhorrence : and they are merciless towards him. See how they have worried and tortured Gagne ! The workman will cap to Thiers, who will cock his

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\* “ Un Français a rarement une passion réelle ou profonde pour le véritable pouvoir ou pour la fortune. Son ambition vise surtout à la réputation, à l'éloge, à l'espoir de donner une haute idée de lui à ses concitoyens ou même à un cercle étroit de familiers, et il se console facilement de bien des déboires s'il peut croire que ceux qui l'entourent le considèrent comme supérieur à sa fortune. Il est assez disposé à accepter son sort et à l'adoucir par sa gaieté et par une heureuse facilité à jouir de toutes les bonnes choses que la civilisation ou la nature gardent encore en réserve pour lui. Le nom de philosophe, dans le sens populaire d'homme facile à contenter, est plus véritablement et plus souvent mérité en France que partout ailleurs. Et parmi les plaisirs que mes concitoyens goûtent si volontiers, et qui, même dans l'adversité, allègent tellement pour eux le fardeau de la vie, je dois donner avec un certain sentiment d'orgueil national, le premier rang au plaisir de l'esprit.”



*couvre-chef* insolently at Persigny or Fleury. Prévost-Paradol spoke with justifiable pride when he said that the man of philosophic temperament, who can be consoled for the rude buffetings of fortune with intellectual riches, and can keep his admiration fixed on the *plaisir de l'esprit* amid the glitter of events and titles, is essentially a Frenchman. In the whole range of French political events, from the Revolution to this day, the men of genius have been in foremost places. Sneerers will say—hence the frequent disruptions of society: but no, hence the few excesses which have marked these disruptions. Lamartine's splendid moral force would never have commanded an English mob. The respect for intellect has reached to the bottom of French society: and it is not equal to that which exists for rank in any society of Englishmen. The impenetrability of our masses—as regards letters, science, and art, is woful; because in case of any upheaving of society, the lower strata will have no umpires to parley between them and the rich and noble. The shock between Labour and the Aristocracy and Plutocracy will be a point-blank blow."

A servant brought the *Gaulois*, and we fell upon an article by Francisque Sarcey—the burden of which was that no man is a prophet in his own country—the subject, exactly ours, Prévost-Paradol in England. Strange to say, M. Francisque Sarcey proceeds on the assumption that the French

intellectual man is not a prophet in his own country ; and that his best plan, when he desires a banquet of praise, is to cross from Calais to Dover, and make the best of his way to Charing Cross, thence to Edinburgh. We soon perceive, however, that the writer is not above the level of M. Alexandre Dumas in his knowledge of England. Having read the accounts of M. Prévost-Paradol's Edinburgh reception which have appeared in the public journals, he concludes that the English literary path is one of roses. My friend grew very impatient indeed while he read M. Sarcey, where he said :—“ Prévost-Paradol must have felt very melancholy on his return to France, to see himself no longer the centre of attraction, the fêted—the lion of the party. He must have contrasted French coldness to the literary man, with British warmth.” This ignorant estimate of the two nations is a public misfortune. My friend exclaims :—

“ Why, if Prévost-Paradol had been an Englishman his name would not have been known at all, to begin with. A leader-writer in the *Débats* ! Who knows anything about the leader-writers in the *Times*—or cares to know, in England ? How many men of splendid, highly-wrought power, have been sacrificed to the reputation of that one paper ? Its fame rests upon a whole churchyard of graves of the great unknown ? The writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* is at once famous ! the ‘ Edin-

burgh' or 'Quarterly' Reviewer gives his genius to the glory of the periodical. In England it is 'Have you seen the "Quarterly" on Gladstone's "Juventus Mundi"?'—in France, 'You must see Esquiros on England in the *Deux Mondes*.' Prévost Paradol was well received in England, because his name was famous in France, as an alert and finished Liberal journalist. He landed, a lion; but every hair of his mane was French. His countrymen's profound veneration for the *plaisir de l'esprit* had given him his pedestal; and to say that had he been born an Englishman under our free institutions he would have simply had to choose his position, and pick out his ministerial portfolio, is to talk—well, nonsense. English middle-class society—and the upper class too—will run after any lion of the moment—the poet or the savage of the hour—the Ojibbeways, or Garibaldi, or Hans Christian Andersen, or Longfellow, or traveller Burton; but they must have the lion ready trimmed for them, and, to use a well known line, they prefer him when he shakes 'a mane *en papillottes*.' The French have a nobler standard, and it reaches to the poorest workman."

In this conflict of talk and writing which has closed in the return of a vaudevillist to be the champion of Revolution in the Legislative Chamber, there is very much to regret, as I hope and trust I have shown. The "falsehood of extremes" is,

however, glittering with epigrams and graced with a hundred happy literary forms.\* The Pyats, and the rest of the declaimers and writers, have caught the spirit of the times; have read and have thought. They are attacked with their own weapons. The advocates of order pelt them with paper pellets; answer their ridiculous shreds of theories with the exposure of past failures; and reply to the foolish patter about direct representation, by a humorous picture of thirty-five millions—of the whole body—of the sovereign people, met on the plains of St. Denis to take certain bills into their consideration. While the debates last, who will bake the bread? is the question put to Citizens Ledru and Pyat, who regard Parliaments as Star Chambers of the nineteenth century.

This is the weapon which is irresistible in France. It is one by the use of which the intelligence of the country is aroused, to beat back the men who are ready to lay the pick at the roots of

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\* The general respect for the intellectual quality was evident in the most grotesque forms of the late electoral contest. Tapon Fougas, a fantastic candidate, announced himself in this way :

Return Tapon-Fougas, and you will return  
The true Juvenal!  
The new Lamartine!  
The new Ponsard!  
And the new J. J. Rousseau!

society. A calm intelligence has been growing apace during the last twenty years, until it has become powerful enough to hold the balance steady between the Absolutists on the one hand, and the Reds,\* who are reckless and desolating, but intellectual obstructives, on the other.

When Rochefort was carried, on the 22nd of November, to the Corps Legislatif, rational liberals rejoiced, because there, they knew, they could deal with him. As to his weekly meetings with his constituents, or masters, they must only hasten his downfall, for already they were the staple food of the light political writers.

Saint Evremont records of Nicholas Vauguelin des Yveteaux that, at the point of death, he had a *sarabande* played to him, that his soul might pass softly—"allegremento."

At the time when a nation is passing out of the darkness and terrors of despotism into the light of quiet, enduring liberty, they who soften the passage, hush the tumult, and make the sweet voice of reason

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\* These, albeit making much noise, are few in numbers, and affect very little the mass of the population. Mathieu de la Drôme said at a political banquet: "You may corrupt individuals, but you cannot corrupt the masses. A glass of water may be poisoned, but I defy anyone to poison the ocean. Call upon the nation to vote, instead of the imperceptible minority; turn the popular flood into the electoral colleges, and it will carry off the filth!"

heard ; players of the sarabande who ride the storm ; are servants of their fellows to be paid, at a long date, by the children of their audience. Moderation is not a popular quality even among those who are most benefited by it.

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### THE RISE OF THE "BONNET ROUGE."

THE Bonnet Rouge has its uses. It is thrust into the air at certain political seasons, for much the same reason that flower-pots are inverted upon poles near young plants, to collect the vermin, and dispose of them. Liberty, a tree of tender growth, takes a fresh life when the ground has been cleared.

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## THE OBSERVATIONS OF MONSIEUR CHOSE.

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### I.

#### MONSIEUR CHOSE'S LAST BITE.

“You have a bite, Monsieur Chose.”

Monsieur Chose had rested his rod upon the parapet of the quay ; and was in conversation with Father Asticot.

A remarkable couple. Monsieur Chose was a barrel planted upon two lively little legs that paddled gallantly under their weight, a well-fed, perhaps over-fed, man, with an eye that twinkled merrily to the music of a corkscrew. His hands were so fat, it was with difficulty he put the bait upon his hook, and he was often obliged to Father Asticot's fingers for helping him. Father Asticot was a tall lean man, with a ragged, drooping, grey moustache, a weary eye and wrinkled face ; and his clothes proclaimed the fallen, needy man. His sabots clattered upon the quay, and the anglers

turned to laugh at his thin shanks covered with blue patched trousers, and the green coat he had worn, his customers said, in their pleasant way, since he was a little boy.

"The pot-au-feu boils," said Father Asticot, while he measured a handsome handful of lively bait to his old customer. "There are beauties for you. With that you will take fish as fast as you can pull them out. Yes, the saucepan boils, the scum is rising. They will come and take your rod out of your hands, perhaps the watch out of your pocket—for you are the bourgeois of their detestation. They will empty your purse, you will find them between your sheets, and then your turn to sell these little beauties will come."

While Father Asticot spoke he surveyed his lively store of bait, and turned it over, with the air of an artist who was satisfied with himself.

"Ah! Bah! old grumbler!" replied Monsieur Chose. "Let them come—your rascals. We shall not give them the trouble of going home again to their boozing kens. Ah! the rogues, they are coming to the top again, are they? They shall have no quarter this time."

"You have a bite, Monsieur Chose," cried his neighbour a second time.

Monsieur Chose rushed to his rod. Great excitement among the spectators. Every eye was fixed upon the float.



"I am quite sure you have not seen the *Tattoo* this morning," Father Asticot said, while he, with the rest, watched the sport of Monsieur Chose.

"A fig for the *Tattoo*," testily answered Monsieur Chose, his hands trembling with the excitement of the moment.

"It was a big one," calmly observed the neighbour, a retired captain, who had deserted Mars for minnows. The reader, it may be, has observed that when a fellow-sportsman calls your attention to a bite which you have lost, he assures you in a friendly way that it must have been a big fish.

"It's this rascal Father Asticot, with his stories about the blackguards of his quarter, the *Tattoo*, and——"

Here the captain (Tonnerre, of the Zouaves of the Guard) rolled a terrible oath in his throat, and glared at the dealer in bait, who stepped up to the officer, and with an appealing look opened his can of treasures. The soldier melted to the fisherman, and his weather-tanned face beamed. Was it in human nature to be hard upon the breeder of such gentles?

"But it is true, captain," Father Asticot took occasion to observe, apologetically. "It is quite true. They are boiling to the surface. They are sharpening their knives, and this time, they say, there shall be no mistake."

"There shall be none, old gossip," growled Captain Tonnerre, with a rattle of oaths that died away in his throat. "Meantime, give me a fresh bait, and let it be a beauty."

Father Asticot selected a prize gentle. "As fat as a retired bourgeois, as Camphre would say"—the old man spoke to himself—"and this is the proper way to serve him." The gentle writhed upon the hook. "That's what's coming; read the *Tattoo*, gentlemen, that's all. Don't blame me."

Monsieur Chose threw down his rod, and turned upon Asticot.

"Be off, old rascal that you are. You have driven the fish from my line. You bring us bad sport, with your stories of the fetid population of your quarter."

"Read the *Tattoo*, that is my answer—the *Tattoo* of this morning. It will make your flesh creep. I salute you, gentlemen." With a mock-heroic air that turned the laugh of the spectators upon Monsieur Chose and his neighbour, the old gentle-breeder lifted his greasy cap and made a profound bow to his customers.

The blouses who were in the crowd, hoping to see a minnow landed before they went on their way to the *atelier*, or the grog-shop, were stirred to the exercise of their grim humour by Father Asticot. Monsieur Chose was told to amuse himself while

there was yet time, for he would be boiled down presently to grease the wheels of the triumphant car of the sovereign people. It was certainly not with what he caught that he had grown so fat. Was madame quite well? Then Captain Tonnerre (who was a little man) was taken in hand. He was the drum-major of the 101st Regiment, the retired colonel of the Ambigu, General Boum out of an engagement.

“What can there be in the *Tattoo* to-day?” said Monsieur Chose to Captain Tonnerre. “The old man is right. The scum is stirring.”

“We will skim it with our swords,” Tonnerre answered, his face set, and oaths rattling in his throat, but his eye fixed steadily upon his float.

The talking and laughing became louder. Monsieur Chose turned for an instant, and defiantly faced the crowd. He was received with shouts of laughter, and a volley of witticisms of the coarsest and dirtiest sort. It was suggested that he should be cast in bronze at once, and presented to Monsieur Thiers. Captain Tonnerre was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Batignolles.

“It is ignoble!” the captain growled.

At this moment he had a bite, and landed his fish. The uproarious hilarity of the blouses covered the old soldier with shame, whilst he unhooked the smallest of minnows; and when, with a superb air of disdain, he cast his line back into the water, a

universal shout of "Ah ! glutton, would you empty the river ?" was raised. Then there were speculations as to the sauce with which the general would eat his salmon. He was recommended to keep the tail half, and try it cold, with oil. "It's madame, the generale, who will be delighted !" piped a brazen gamin.

"What can there be in the *Tattoo* ?" murmured Monsieur Chose. "Why, they're surrounding us, captain."

"Leave them to me," growled Tonnerre. "I will make very short work of them if they pass certain bounds."

They retreated when the captain wheeled sharply about from time to time ; but pressed back towards the fishermen directly he turned his back upon them—laughing, joking, whistling, and singing more boisterously with each advance.

"Citizen fisherman," at length a leading gamin shouted, "command my services to carry home the friture. But you must introduce me to the citoyenne, and we will have a fraternal banquet."

"Blackguard !" shouted Monsieur Chose, dropping his rod, and folding his fat arms with some difficulty. "I'll pull your ears all the way to the commissary of police. Blackguards all—be off !"

"Don't exasperate them," growled Tonnerre. "I have a bite."

"Exasperate them! The first who comes near me goes into the river."

"He's superb! He's statuesque! If there were only a photographer here. Don't stir, citizen. That's it, put on a severe air. Doesn't he look terrible? He's too fat for Hercules, but what a model for a tobacco-jar!" A Paris crowd of blouses is a formidable body—with the tongue.

"Leave them! Leave them, Monsieur Chose—you have a nibble," said the captain, suppressed rage giving a tremor to his voice.

"The fish may go to the devil!" replied Monsieur Chose, still facing the mocking crowd.

"He is making up his mind which he will eat. Ah, the ogre! Ah, the monster! But he doesn't look very fresh; suppose we wash him for dinner."

"Poltroons! Communards!" shouted Monsieur Chose, unable to control his anger.

The captain quietly laid his rod upon the ground, took the bait off his line, saying, "You have done it now, Monsieur Chose. That means war. Let it be so."

The crowd uttered a low general growl. Communards! There was no more play. The eyes of boys and men flashed fire. Two ringleaders tucked up their sleeves, muttering the word as a battle-cry, "Communards!"

Captain Tonnerre quietly put away his tackle—watching the tumult with one eye, and talking and

swearing in his throat. Monsieur Chose stood firm, while the blouses yelled at him, approaching him with every shout ; and the foremost blouse was within arm's length of his shoulder, when Father Asticot burst through the throng, and stood before his customers facing the readers of the *Tattoo*. The old man spoke to them as one having authority.

"Hands off! Detest the bourgeois, that is well : but respect the old man." With this Asticot solemnly lifted his cap. Then turning aside to Monsieur Chose and Captain Tonnerre, he whispered, "Get away as fast as you can."

The blouses, although touched by Asticot's appeal, were too deeply incensed to be quieted with a word. Old men should behave like old men. The bourgeois had insulted the people, and he must offer an apology. The idea caused Monsieur Chose to shrug his shoulders as a mark of his supreme contempt. The movement was answered by a savage yell from the blouses ; and it is not difficult to guess what the upshot of the incident would have been, had not Father Asticot, pointing to some kepis hastening towards them, said sternly :

"L'Autorité !"

"You were never in your life nearer becoming ground-bait," Captain Tonnerre observed to his fellow-sportsman when they had reached their café, and were enjoying the hour of absinthe.

Monsieur Chose had watched his last by the banks of the Seine.

Stirred by the revelations of Father Asticot, and the demeanour of the blouses, he cast his line henceforth in waters much more troubled than those of the Seine, even when the floods are out.

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## II.

## MONSIEUR CHOSE MAKES HIS OBSERVATIONS.

How blind are parents now-a-days ! My brother Jules, for instance, has a strapping boy, just eighteen years of age ; as strong as his father's shaft-horse ; a rough country lad, who has had a fair education it is true, but who has not yet the force to make his way against the prejudices of the world. He is to come to Paris—to seek his fortune.

“ Send him—in sabots,” I wrote to his parent.  
“ If you put him in leather, you are no father.”

Madame Chose remonstrated with me, begging that I would not infuse bad ideas into the sound head of my brother, who was quietly making his fortune at Rennes ; and, thank Heaven, had not yet taken to the unprofitable business of putting the world to rights.

“ Since that unfortunate day,” Madame observed, “ when you had an altercation with some blouses on the quay, and gave up the honourable pleasure of providing us with an occasional friture, you are a different man. You who have been content all



your life with an occasional glance at the *Débats*, and a look at the *Gazette des Tribunaux* on Sundays or holidays, suddenly spend your money on the journalism of the Gavroches, and the gentlemen of Belleville and the barrières. You can't sleep at nights when there's an election on hundreds of leagues away; you who never took your nightcap off on the 4th of September. You caught that cold, which has lasted you half through the winter, hanging about the railway-station to collect gossip from the deputies returning from Versailles. What have you to do with it all, Monsieur Chose? You have had work enough all your life: let them divide and subdivide; let them put themselves into committees and commissions of thirty, or a hundred and thirty if they like—what does it matter? They can't touch us; or if they could, your interference would not prevent them. Some day you'll mind what I say: burn all these disgusting papers, and ask me for your fishing-tackle again."

I have sometimes leaned towards my wife's way of thinking, saying to myself, "They can't take an egg out of my omelette, let the Assembly make a blunder every time it sits." But then I have reproached myself with the selfishness of this view, and have recognised my duty as a citizen to educate myself for the proper discharge of my functions as a voter. I owe a duty also to my own flesh and blood. I am bound to afford my nephews and

nieces, even my cousins in the third degree, the benefit of my study of the political drama that is playing under my nose. Minnow-fishing, when the constitution hangs—nay, when three or four constitutions hang—in the balance, is the resource of an idiot.

Therefore, I repeat, I advised my brother to send his son to Paris—in sabots. And why? Because having seriously observed the times in which we live, I am persuaded that there is a golden ring in the clatter of sabots. People respect the wooden shoe. Out of the sabot, now-a-days, men step into bank parlours, enormous administrations, golden directorships, the Chamber of Deputies, nay, into presidential chairs. The world will have it so. To begin with, the lad who reaches Paris in sabots excites no envy ; therefore he provokes no enemy to oppose him. Every little step he takes in the world redounds to his honour, and compels applause, provided he keeps the clogs in sight. A trifling slit or two in his garments will do him good service. The fewer sous he can show the better. When he becomes a great and an affluent man, the world will comfort itself with the thought that time was when he had no stockings, and when his blue feet shook in the damp straw of his sabots. It is an offence to be prosperous without having been forlorn and supperless ; to have a high hand in the office you have not swept ; to smoke Havannahs on the

Boulevards where you have never searched for cigar ends. Before you are permitted to wear clean hands, you must be provided with substantial evidence of a time when they were as black as any ragman's. Society will no longer permit you to have been a comely bird from the egg.

This is the reason why so many of the great men who govern us to-day keep their sabots in their ante-chambers; go out to dinner with them; even show them in the tribune of the Assembly. In the East men remove their shoes to pass into the presence chamber; with us the wearer of the wooden shoe is a privileged person.

I gave Madame Chose two examples. She finds it difficult to keep her temper when I mention the name of old Asticot; but I imposed silence while I unfolded his touching story. He began life in dazzling shoes, and with full pockets. Richly fitted out, and fired with the generous enthusiasm of youth, he went with the expedition to Greece in 1828. In that noble cause he first figured in public life—but the result was dismal. Returned from Missolonghi he was reduced to give lessons in modern Greek to the studious youth of the time, whose name was not legion even in those days. He was a professor before he was thirty—poor devil!—professor of Greek, Greek history, Greek everything! His clothes got shabbier month after month; his class-room echoed with his solitary

tread. And still he held to his chair, and loved his Greek. Beyond it the world did not exist for him. He lived on bread and grapes in the summer ; on sausage and bread, and cabbage soup, in the winter. He was on his way to the sabots in which he should have started.

Weary with disappointment, he entered his class-room on a certain morning, and found a score of people in it. Was the glittering dream of his early manhood assuming tangible shape at length ? The professor took his place, with a flutter at the heart ; and while he disposed his books, still the new pupils came flocking in—in hot haste to sip at the beloved fountain. The room was packed ; he would never be able to make his voice heard through the hubbub. But he began addressing himself to the people who were close to his desk. He had not uttered many words when the rattle of musketry was heard in the street. “ Again ! ” was murmured all over the room. Poor Asticot !—it was one of the bloody days of June ; and the crowd in his class-room had rushed in to get beyond the reach of the soldiers, who were firing at random.

He broke down after that, sinking gradually through the strata of poverty's ranks. He was tutor in poor schools—the new one always poorer than the last. His heart hardened with his bread. That rattle of musketry which dissipated the delightful vision of a moment, made him what is called

an enemy of society. He got away to those regions of Paris where the higher you climb the lower you get; to the Rue Mouffetard, then Belleville, and thereabouts. They finished the old man; took all the Greek out of him; made of his little learning a very dangerous thing indeed; and at last reduced him to be a breeder of gentles—and riots—after having failed with old clothes and as a street messenger.

Now, had Father Asticot brought his faculties to Paris in wooden shoes, with wisps of straw for socks, he would have ended in a palm-embroidered coat—a member of the Institute.

Madame Chose was not convinced, although I strengthened my instance with a hundred others, and showed her Rachel singing for sous before the Boulevard cafés, the beggar Jew founding a race of millionaires, the wine-shop keeper's son starting for a throne, the Swiss goat-herd as the head of the united Gas Companies of Paris.

I tried her another way, unfolding my evening paper with an impressive gesture.

“To begin with!” she cried. “Don't quote the papers to me. One says the President ought to be worshipped on our knees; the other that he ought to be nearer Cayenne than Versailles; a third that he wears his head still only because these are milksop times. He is angel and rogue; genius and madcap; patriot and base egotist. Fold up

your paper, Monsieur Chose. In our happy days, when you were amiable enough to remember that I had a little weakness for Seine gudgeon, as I have told you very often, you were quite content with the *Débats* and the *Gazette des Tribunaux*."

I was not to be beaten from my ground, for I felt that the future of my nephew depended on my firmness.

I remarked that the times were critical, and that they were bringing new men to the front, but nearly all—I stuck to this—in sabots.

I had an excellent instance at hand. There had been a storm in the Assembly between the party of the Sabots and the party of the Lorgnons. The Lorgnons and Sabots, these are the rival factions that send France to bed every night with a revolver under her pillow, and wake her to wonder what the form of government may be before the sun goes down. The Sabots would have touched the noses of the Lorgnons on the occasion in question, in spite of the ringing of the President's bell, had not some few rational men stood between. A well-intentioned Lorgnon—and this is my instance—rose on the morrow of the disturbance, to suggest a middle course, that would give a secure day after to-morrow to his countrymen.

He had no more chance of carrying his point than poor Asticot had of making his fortune by teaching Greek. He was a marquis, to begin with.

He was young, and he drove a mail-phaeton. He had come to Paris, in an express train, from the ancestral château. In all his life he had not earned the fraction of a red liard. He was sumptuously attired. The hands he raised in the declamatory passages of his harangue were white. His boots were of polished jet, and from his neck depended an eye-glass. Will any rational man tell me that this young nobleman had the least chance of making his way?

He spoke admirable sense in admirable French. He showed that he had studied well at college, and that he had mastered the public questions of his time. He recommended a fair, open, honourable, and liberal course. He was received with jeers by the triumphant Sabots, and covered with confounding epithets and jests. He was a Pitt in the bud. Where was his nurse? His big words and solemn warnings only reminded his enemies of a school-boy with a big pipe in his mouth. A big pipe! The Sabots are at home with this figure. Pipe-en-Bois is a prince among the Sabots, and the probability is that the audacious Lorgnon has never had a pipe between his lips in the whole course of his life. The pipe-and-beer policy is one of too robust a kind for the handling of the marquis. It is clear that he will never make way against the sturdy front of the Sabots. In any case he is too young. His words are those of wisdom and mode-

ration ; he has mastered the subject on which he is speaking ; but where are his wrinkles—how much is he over fifty ? There are dozens of people who proclaim his exceptional power, his application, his genius, his native eloquence. But will nobody falsify the registry of his birth, shake him out of his well-fitting clothes, soil his hands, shave his head, and lend him a pair of wooden shoes ? If not, he has no real friends.

He might have been tolerated on one condition, namely, that he had had an apprenticeship to sedition to show, or a certificate of irreligion, or a diploma from some provincial school of revolt. But the wretched young man has never passed through the mud.

The marquis made an excellent speech, and his reward was a thrashing through the organs of the Sabots. Suppose he drops the Assembly, spurns the tribune, closes his books, and drives his mail-phaeton off to the palaces of the painted ladies, and the clubs with convenient card-tables, and the turf where the heaviest bets are making ; who will be the first to blame him and call down the scorn of the people upon him ?—why, the Sabots, who yelled at him in the tribune.

“ Therefore, Madame,” I observed, authoritatively, to my wife, who was still shaking her doubting head, “ I shall write to Rennes, and advise Jules to send his boy to Paris in sabots. He is a



likely lad, I hear, and I will not stand by and see his hopes destroyed by shoe-leather. Monsieur Thiers himself came humbly to the great city. Had the young Marseillais approached the capital in a drag, and with an escutcheon and liveries, do you think he would have been brought under the attention of the great Monsieur de Talleyrand, and have had an opportunity of wiping the nose of the young marquis (Monsieur de Talleyrand's grand-nephew), of whom I have been talking? It is all put very cleverly in the *Figaro*, Madame."

"Don't talk to me about newspaper writers," answered Madame Chose. "I will not except even the *Débats* now-a-days; and—and—you haven't convinced me, Chose. Write as you please; I shall write to Madame Jules. The poor child's shoes will tell us who has the greater influence."

I could contain myself no longer when my wife added:

"Better return to your gudgeon, my dear; there is nobody like Monsieur Chose to fish a friture."

I rushed off to my café and my club, for I had joined a club; but the mocking laugh of my wife sang in my head through two or three games of dominoes that evening.

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## III.

## TO THE TRIBUNE BY RAIL.

THEY are in groups in the immense shed, or hall, or Hall of the Silent Footsteps ; gesticulating, whispering, declaiming, twitching one another by the button, snuffing, smoking. You might gather a complete exhibition of the spectacles of all nations from their sagacious noses. The Sabot carries a stout stick ; the Lorgnon a thin umbrella that would be at home in St. James's Street. The notables among the Lorgnons are old-fashioned men ; some are buttoned to the throat in coats of military cut that cover honourable scars ; some are robust and slouching, and their voices recall the speaking-trumpet and the quarter-deck. A stiff, nimble dandy of seventy ; a gandin who has just laid down his cue at the Jockey Club to spare an hour or two for the benefit of his country ; burly provincials—the heavy, deep-toned Norman and the little, fiery, squeaking Marseillais, more than flavoured with garlic. Dapper, assured, generally courted gentlemen of the press ; some with mocking

lips and laughing eyes, who consider the regeneration of the country the very best joke in the world, and have pinned an epithet or an anecdote upon every deputy; others solemn, bald, and with their brows knit, as becomes men who are the governors of the governors of France. Pepper these groups with loungers, spice them with the jests of the lookers-on, and serve the whole as the parliamentary macedoine that may be tasted any morning at the Versailles railway station (Rive Droite) about half-past 1 o'clock.

The reader may think that I speak lightly of a very solemn matter; but, pray, how am I to be serious when there is hardly a grave face to be seen? When first I was drawn away from the gudgeon of my beloved Seine, I looked abroad never daring to smile. I crept through Belleville with my palms upon my pockets. When I woke in the morning, I listened for the guns. When I went out I was relieved to see the shops open. And could anything, pray, be more natural? Every night my evening papers told me—with surprising vivacity and variety of expression and metaphor—that I was living upon a volcano.

But I shook off my fears by degrees, and can now laugh with the loudest, even when I am told that the Damocles sword is suspended, merely by one of the silver hairs of the head of the most eminent of eminent men, over the neck of that most

unfortunate of modern ladies—France. I have learned to say a clever thing about the cannon's mouth. A chassepot has no more significance for me than those straw tubes our English visitors use for their American drinks. I think I am lighter-hearted than Monsieur Ollivier was in the laughing hours of 1870; and therefore I am in a better condition than ever for making my observations on the diurnal crises through which my adored country passes, smiling all the way.

We have an express to Versailles. Imagine the Left and Left Centre, the Right and Right Centre, with a score of journalists, shaken in a bag like loto numbers, and thrown into boxes, each box containing eight individuals. This is the train of the Wise-aces of the Republic. This is the serpent that winds swiftly through the sour vineyards of Suresnes to the tribune planted in Louis the Fourteenth's bonbonnière of a theatre, and buries its fangs in the bosom of la belle France! Of the serpent the journalists are the rattle—the amusing rattle.

Who dares to say that pure comedy is dead in France? Is it possible to imagine a more charming theatre, a more distinguished audience, a more efficient company? And the national theatre in the palace which has been called by a barbarous Englishman, I think one Gibbon by name, “a huge heap of littleness,” has, in the matter of music, the advantage of a bell over the Théâtre Français.

The audience are shown to their places by the politest of ushers. It is what managers call a paper house always, the orders being distributed by the performers; which, by the way, surprises me, because I think the eminent manager might effect a large addition to his budget by letting his boxes.

The performance has begun, the bell has tinkled. The question is, shall it be *Vive la France*, or *Vive la République*?

It is true that we have a President of a Republic; that the country of our adoration is France; and that yonder tribune is the spot from which the glorious nation is to be governed. Within these gilded walls is gathered the representative wisdom of the land which is the centre of civilisation. The country has just been freed, and the Wiseacres have given three times three in celebration of the great event. Left and Left Centre, Right and Right Centre, have cheered with one accord. But now the Lorgnons and the Sabots appear on the scene. The farce opens quietly. "*Vive la France*" observes Lorgnon; "*Vive la République*" responds Sabot, accompanying his reply with a long threatening growl. In a moment, there is a mighty movement through the theatre; and then the play proceeds for an entire hour.

If an Englishman could imagine a free fight, without the exchange of a single actual blow; jeers

and counter jeers ; fists to the right, and fists to the left ; yells and counter yells ; insulting epithets, plentiful as bon-bons at a Roman carnival ; with Monsieur Grévy for central figure, brandishing a bell from a high desk, and patriotically going through a pantomime of beseeching, imploring, protesting, and threatening—he would first obtain an idea of what is called a sad episode in the gorgeous theatre of the Bourbons.

Personalities are as copious in the Assembly as in the contemporary chronicles of its doings. At a word from the Right the Left bounds from the benches as though spears had been suddenly driven through them.

Has Monsieur Pelletan, or has he not, called the President a third horse to draw the state coach over the hill ? Has Monsieur de Kerdrel tried to overturn Monsieur Thiers ? The two questions furnish the material of an excellent petite comédie. Monsieur de Kerdrel opens with an indignant denial, his soliloquy being interrupted with a confounding noise peculiar to the Versailles theatre, called brouhaha. Far from desiring to overturn the eminent statesman, he is proud of the esteem Monsieur Thiers has for him. But Monsieur Pelletan did say Monsieur Thiers was a third horse to pull them over the steeps of a Republic.

The Left indulge in more brouhaha. The eyes of the Sabots flash lightning ; their throats provide

the thunder; and in the storm Monsieur Pelletan bounds to the tribune. He has not called the President a third horse. He has; he hasn't; he has! Monsieur Pelletan goes further—all Monsieur de Kerdrel's friends, all the Right, have constantly tried to trip up the President. Then ensues a brisk sparring-match between the two deputies, the Left and Right acting as backers—and the President looking on hopelessly. It is a curious sight; but what good it can do France, I was forced to admit to Madame Chose, I could not see. I left them fighting over Monsieur Thiers; Monsieur Thiers looking as fresh as a girl the while, and keeping a merry twinkle in his eye. As well he might, for he saw that neither the Lorgnons nor the Sabots could move a peg without him.

But here is a comedy with serious interest in it. Monsieur Latour, by way of a suggestive opening scene, affirms that during the war, when Monsieur Lacour was in office, he sent back a certain report to the prefect of the Rhone, with this marginal note, "Shoot me all these fellows!" With a superb air Lacour cries, "Prove it. Where's the report?" Latour is of the Lorgnons; Lacour of the Sabots. Latour in a solemn soldierly manner rises to a hushed audience, and after having warmly vindicated the conduct of the troops he commanded in the war, produces the testimony of the general who was ordered to "shoot me all those fellows."

The Lorgnons are delighted—the Sabots in consternation. Latour adds emphatically that his men fought well.

“Yes, yes, they were not Republicans,” cries a Lorgnon.

The comedy begins. Nobody can say that it is wanting in movement. Monsieur Langlois, pale as death, rushes at the throat of the daring Lorgnon, and is followed by an admiral of the fleet—by half the Sabots, in fact. There is not the smallest mistake about there being thorough brouhaha this time. It is a hand-to-hand struggle—not for the arguments, but the coat-collars of opponents. The unfortunate Lorgnon, who has insulted the Republicans, is surrounded by his party like a standard-bearer on the battle-field. Parliamentary language! I assure you I had not the courage to repeat to Madame Chose all I heard from the lips of the wise men we have elected to revive the grandeur of France; especially as, while I related to her the Latour-Lacour incident, she was doing me the honour of mending the tail of my coat which had been torn in the excitement and rush which followed the actual fight.

No English muffin-boy, wending his way through the foggy streets of Soho, rings more in his round than Monsieur Grévy did in the Latour-Lacour *melée*. Even when the offending Lorgnon retracted, the Sabots rolled threatening murmurs at



him. Then came the turn of Monsieur Lacour, author of the marginal note. He cut and thrust about him with a will—conveying by his air and words the conviction that at any rate he was the man who might have written with the point of his official sword, “Shoot me all these fellows.” Albert Millaud observed of him that he knew how to use the slang dictionary, and to adopt the manners of the Halles; that his coarse cynicism and shameless retorts made even the Left ashamed of their man. It seemed so. While the Lorgnons shrugged their shoulders, laughed, protested, and murmured, the Sabots were quiet as mice. Then Lacour turned upon the Mobiles of Latour, and said they were drunken fellows who wouldn’t fight; who passed their time in revolting orgies under the smiling approval of their superior officers. By way of peroration Lacour denied the marginal note; and on descending from the tribunal he was received into three brace of arms from the Left.

I believe that in the English House of Commons members do not often hug one another in token of approval; and that the greatest orator who ever breathed would never provoke a kiss from the chief of his party; but I find that a very little bit of oratory carries a man literally into the arms of his supporters at Versailles.

The Latour-Lacour comedy ended, after an uproar about Monsieur Latour’s Mobiles, and a

passage of yelling at Monsieur Jules Favre, in a general dance out of all the characters ; in which, by the way, my coat-tail suffered, in a manner I have already had the honour of describing.

I wonder whether it was a good day's work for France ? I confess that, as I travelled back to Paris, I became somewhat bewildered ; for on the platform I heard one gentleman threaten to pull the nose of another who had called him a Republican. And yet the walls of the mairies, my tax-papers, and the little bank-notes in my pocket, tell me I am one of a republic !

I begin to think, with Madame Chose, that I had better return to my gudgeon. She has observed to me that at any rate I spoiled fewer clothes as a fisherman than I do as a politician. My coat-tail will be shaken before me for many a long day to come. Women never forget ; and their logic is inexorable.

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## IV.

MONSIEUR THE PRESIDENT OF—WHAT IS IT ?

HE rises at three minutes to five, and not at five, as that inventor of facts and chiffonnier of old ideas, Hippolyte Patatras, tells us once a week in the *Guignol*. Very frequently he lightly rubs his eyes. Sometimes he raises himself upon one presidential elbow ; yesterday it was his left elbow. Then he lightly draws his hands through the silver toupet which is destined to go down to posterity with the curl upon the first Napoleon's forehead, and the tips of Napoleon the Third's moustache. Then, placing his fingers before the eloquent mouth, he yawns. By this time the clock is on the stroke of five ; by this time he is on his legs, his lamp is trimmed, and the affairs of Europe are under way. While they are moving slowly ahead, he prepares his coffee. The sagacity with which the boiling water is poured upon the special Mocha ; the learned glances which fall upon the biggin ; the thorough knowingness with which the coffee-cup is handled—bespeak the remarkable man.

The fragrant fumes curl about the snowy head that is bent over masses of state papers. The sun has not winked yet on the horizon ; but the destinies of France are well in hand. It is a touching sight, that should soften the hearts of his roughest and fiercest opponents, to see this brave old man not waiting for the sunrise to work for his country. I cannot say—I read so many papers—whether he is right or wrong ; selfish or unselfish ; an intriguer or a frank, honest politician ; but he is a hero, by the burden which he bears upon his gallant shoulders. I love him for his work ; the prodigious store of knowledge which he has put by ; the vast fields of public affairs he has trotted over ; for his bounding spirits, and valiant resolves under difficulties ; and, if I may not call myself of his party, I shall never fail in touching my hat to him as one of his personal admirers—proud that he is my countryman.

He has got through a mountain of labour when the Pink of Politeness arrives at six o'clock. The Pink is his old friend ; the national letter-writer, the universal apologist ; the great man of the ante-chamber, who lives with his back bent. Together the two prodigious toilers make short work of despatches, letters, petitions, drafts of bills, invitations, arrangements for diplomatic receptions, prefectoral appeals and troubles ; and are ready to go into affairs of state generally with the council, as soon

as the ministers please after breakfast. Not a moment is lost. Over the morning cutlet a diverting gossip on the treaty with England; with the omelette, the settlement of the future franchise of France; and, while the coffee is being served, an ambassador is removed from China to Washington. A ministerial council is an easy way of passing the time, from breakfast till the meeting of the Assembly. To be sure the parliamentary storm of yesterday has to be discussed, and a line of ministerial action decided upon; to be sure there are some troublesome interpellations ahead that must be met; Lyons is simmering and Marseilles is boiling over, and there is an uneasy movement in the dangerous stratum of Paris; but the President smiles and works, and works and smiles through it all; and buttoning his snuff-brown coat (as much a part of him as the grey capote was part of the immortal Little Corporal), trots away on the arm of his stalwart officer-in-waiting—to the tribune.

It is a great day. The boxes are filled with ambassadors, generals, prefects, and fine ladies. The manager's box contains the manager's wife and a princess or two. The ushers have had a bad time of it. The deputies have been pestered for a week past for orders for this extraordinary representation of—shall I say legerdelangue? An uninitiated man might imagine he was at a court ceremonial, and that in a moment the national air

would vibrate through the theatre, and Cæsar would enter, with Cæsar's peerless wife glittering with jewels. The ladies in the most fantastic dresses, and in the highest spirits, occupy the front row of the boxes. Is the farceur Vivier going to play fantastic tricks on his horn from the table in the tribune, or is Levassor about to present us with his delightful caricature of the Englishman on his travels? I felt inclined to look out for a bill of the play; and began wondering where they could have put the band. But I was brought to myself, and to the solemnity of the occasion, when I saw a tuft of snowy hair making itself higher than the rest of the crowd before me. There was a flutter, a rustling, and a nervous coughing through the theatre as the little performer at length stood out from the throng, and appeared, brisk as the morning air, in the tribune.

A bright, fresh, sharply-cut face, roofed with stiff white hair; a keen, quickly-moving eye seen through a portentous pair of spectacles; a rigid military frock-coat buttoned to the throat, and the head settled in an ample collar; and all on the smallest conceivable scale. It is greatness in a nutshell. And these people—representatives of dynasties and leaders of armies—are hanging breathless upon the words of the little man, who is arranging his glass of cold coffee, unfolding his handkerchief, and twitching his spectacles to a just

balance upon his nose. The destiny of my country is the piece that is upon the play-bill to-day; and the whole responsibility of the performance rests upon these tiny shoulders. In order to get through with it the speaker must command profound silence. You feel such tenderness towards him as you have for a child, and hush the people about you. He waits till the last cough has subsided, and then a shrill, piping voice which startles you, proceeds from the little figure. The pitch is high, the tones are piercing. Every word is heard at the back of every box.

And such words! They were big with the fate of France. As the wonderful little man rolled them out, I thought of the conjuror who fills a theatre with flowers out of his hat. People were charmed. The flowers fell to the right and to the left with strict impartiality. The Right jeered, the Left applauded, the Centres made a confused noise. And still the voice piped away bravely—steady through the storm as a boatswain's whistle. I had travelled all the way to Versailles in order to ascertain the form of government under which I was living, having been utterly confused on the subject by the *Tattoo*, and the views of Monsieur Hippolyte in the *Guignol*. The *Tattoo* informed me that I was living under a republic that was as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar, and that all other forms of government were hence-

forth impossible, which was cheering when I reflected on the number of stable governments that had successively compelled me to put up my shop shutters and hide my till in the cellar. The *Guignol* assured me that I was not only upon a volcano, but that the tassel of my night-cap was hanging over the edge of the crater; that the Republic was a rickety thing bolstered up by a company of fools and knaves, and that a republic had about as good a chance of enduring in France, as a farrier would have of pursuing his business in a powder magazine.

The wonderful orator piped away for two hours. I lost not a single syllable, for the facets of his glittering sentences are of faultless edge. Now I settled myself comfortably in my seat, believing that I was the citizen of an incorruptible and unassailable republic; and now, again, I was cast upon a sea of doubt, in a cockle-shell called the Pact. The Lorgnons were not at the pains of concealing their disgust, nor were they nice as to the forms in which they conveyed their displeasure to the leading performer in the most remarkable comedy I, an old play-goer, have ever heard. On the other hand the Sabots roared out their pleasure when the shrill voice told them that they enjoyed the republic of their dreams, and it only remained with them to make its walls of adamant, and its temple of porphyry.



Four or five times during those two tumultuous hours I was shifted from a republic to a monarchy, and back again. All this time I admired, with my whole heart and mind, the white head from which the mighty confusion of oracular dicta was proceeding. The tears came to my eyes when the old man's trembling voice passed over the misfortunes of our country. Yea, I laughed and I cried, for it was a noble comedy, but what had I to carry back to Madame Chose? I was compelled to confess to her that I was quite as wise when I left the St. Lazare station as when I returned to it.

"Bless me, Chose," she said to me when I had explained to her all I had seen and heard, in very warm language—for my heart had been stirred—"bless me, how can you put yourself in such a heat about such a trifle? Twenty times during dinner you have asked me what your pocket-idol was president of. 'President, my dear—of what?' said you over your soup, then again over the most delicious capon Anastasia has ever cooked for us. I thought I should have a little peace over the artichokes, for you are generally silent when you are eating a favourite dish; but no, with the artichoke in your hand, you repeated your stupid question, 'President of what?' I don't know, and I don't care, Monsieur Chose."

But Madame Chose is not quite so irrational a being as it is her pleasure, now and then, to

affect to be. I took occasion to draw her attention to the surprising activity of the President. All good women have a respect for hard work ; and when I sketched our brave little veteran writing, speaking, giving audiences, holding councils, paying visits of ceremony, travelling to Paris and back again for an interview, conducting the reconstruction of his house, disposing of mountains of letters, bowing, smiling, contriving fresh lively sallies for the dinner in the evening, and all from before the peep of day till his hour of siesta comes late in the afternoon, and then waking up for a fresh bout of work in the shape of incessant receptions of official persons to midnight ; when, I say, I sketched all this to Madame Chose, I elicited from her the acknowledgment that the little man was a very great one.

“ If he wouldn’t make things as dear as they are,” Madame Chose continued, “ I should give him my vote—if I had one. But I never go to the grocer’s, without finding a sou put upon this, or two sous clapped upon that. I have it—he must be president of the grocers. They will never desert him. They share the plunder between them. He puts two sous on the hectolitre, which enables them to put a sou on the litre. That’s your régime, Monsieur Chose. Ah, the rogues. ‘ President of what ? ’ say you ; ‘ of the grocers,’ say I.”

I begged Madame Chose to observe that liberty

was a jewel worth paying a substantial price for. I have seen madame, since I had the honour of taking her on our bridal walk through the Bois de Boulogne, in, I may say, a thorough passion at least three or four times; but never since the unlucky day when I gave the fish I had caught to her cousin, Madame Julie, for a friture, have I experienced such a storm as that which burst over my devoted head when I mentioned the sacred word, liberty.

"You, too, Monsieur Chose," she cried. "I thought that you who have been in business twenty-two years, would have had more sense. Don't ask the men, for they are idiots, what they think of your liberty; ask their wives, who buy the bread and vegetables. Go and ask the poor creatures who stay at home to make the pot-au-feu, while you gentlemen talk politics and play at dominoes at the café, what liberty throws into the saucepan; what it takes out of the cupboard; what wages it pays and what trade it drives? Messrs. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Company, what a sweet firm of bankers they would make! I wouldn't trust them with change for a franc. I was not aware you were so far gone, Monsieur Chose. I had better send your night-cap to be dyed red. Blood-red, do you hear, Monsieur Chose?"

Hear! The words ring upon my tympanum still. I fell into my arm-chair when my wife had

bounced out of the room, and unfolded the last edition of the *Tattoo* (which differs little from the first save in four or five lines of additional misinformation printed in capitals), reserving the *Guignol* for a softer moment. I had just read that Henry V. was a moral cretin, when the door was swiftly opened, and my wife, thrusting in her head, cried, "Who bought the petroleum? Citizen Liberty." With that she slammed the door.

Shrugging my shoulders, I resumed my reading. I had reached the interesting point of the leading article, where the candid reader was pressed to admit that the younger branch of the Bourbons was rotten and worthless, when a stream of cold air told me the door was again open.

Madame Chose, who had by this time disembarassed herself of some of her hair for the night (of which, I am bound to say, she has a collection that does honour to her taste and judgment), was before me.

"Who," she asked, passionately, under her breath, "who lit the petroleum? Citizen Equality?" I trembled under her fierceness, and was relieved when she shut the door, and, to my delight, bolted it.

Now should I have a peaceful hour. I would study carefully the statements of the *Tattoo* and *Guignol*, and endeavour to settle in my mind, before I went to bed, my knotty question—presi-

dent of what? I had dismissed one dynasty thoroughly, and was deep in the wickedness of the second, when I heard a hand upon the bolt of my wife's bed-chamber. She was still stirring. I faced round to meet the gale. The door flew open with such force that the *Tattoo* was blown from my knees to the ground. Madame was in curl-papers that trembled upon her head.

"Who danced round the fire?" she hissed at me. "Citizen Fraternity. You are on a pretty road, Monsieur Chose." And, with a profound bow, she bade me good-night, doubly locking the door this time.

I, who thought everything was as easy as bon-jour, when I heard that smiling president! But, president of what? Still asking myself this question (for the *Guignol*, answering the *Tattoo*, vowed there was no republic in existence) I fell asleep.

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## V.

## A POLONAISE—PAIN DE SIÈGE.

How many men died in that winter of the terrible war? How many hectares of snow were stained with blood? The poor children were carried by scores to the cemeteries. They could hardly open the Common Grave fast enough. Widows were weeping in every house. Death stood in the ante-chamber of every home. There were no fires. There was no gas in the streets. And hour by hour the booming guns struck terror through the hearts of pale mothers and famished children. In the very house which now shelters me, a shell crashed through the roof one morning, at the peep of day, and killed outright a father and a child, leaving a mad mother as the sole survivor of one of the most honourable and modest households I have ever looked upon. I cannot think of those icy hours I have spent getting our little rations of meat, without a shudder, even now when we have bought the enemy out of our country. How many times did

I pace behind coffins—big and little—in that winter? Mont Parnasse, Père la Chaise, Montmartre seemed to me to be threatened with a glut of human remains. And then those interminable processions of the ambulance people; the river boats laden with wounded men, with the dark blood showing through their bandages. My hair whitened in that dread winter time; and many months passed after the strife was ended before Tonnerre could persuade me to throw my line once more into the Seine. For I was in both sieges; in the siege of Paris by the Germans, and the siege of Paris by the French. The first was bad enough, Heaven knows, when the children were dying like flies in autumn, and we were eating the food from the sewers, and we could see the inevitable end approaching, through the squabbles and incompetency of the men who had seized upon the reins of government on the morrow of Sedan, just as a thief gets your purse in the tumult of a crowd. It was bitter to watch the Germans passing under Napoleon's Triumphal Arch, and to look upon them smoking their big pipes in the Champs Elysées. I wept, I know, for one, like a child; and Madame Chose (who was never so amiable as she appeared through that winter) made me a good bouillon to comfort me.

The food came in. Those good English sent us immense stores which our Incapables had not the

sagacity to distribute equitably over the lean population. But the sight of milk, and butter, and fresh meat ; the taste of good bread once more ; the twinkling of a few lights along the Boulevards ; the huge relief to the mind when there was silence in the night, and we knew that the dreadful bloodshed was finished for a time—for our time at least, I may say—all this was a joy that went very far in repayment of the anguish we Parisians had suffered. But the joy was brief—a flash of light in a tunnel ; just breathing-time in the torture-chamber.

In the second siege the screws were tightened to their last twist ; the wedges were driven home in the stocking ; the sewers overflowed the streets. He who was my servant yesterday was my master to-day. Furies streamed out of cellars and garrets, and took arms, and yelled republican slang ; stuck Phrygian caps upon heads that had never felt the comb ; and, between their hags' teeth, called for blood ! My beautiful Paris was doomed this time. The enemy had left arms in the hands of the mob ; the mob was led by lettered ruffians, scapegraces, prodigal sons reduced to rags, and vain strutting theorists who would banquet upon their mother's grave, or practise vivisection on their own children. These hateful and cowardly egotists put their heels upon immortal canvases ; trod out the richest leaves of Ingres'



laurel. The walls flamed with their ignoble decrees. They were ready to command the shrubs in the public gardens to grow roots upwards, with their flowers in the soil. They had a right, which they made for the occasion, to enter every man's house and command the keys of his strong box. They turned the sacristy into a tavern, where they caroused on stolen wine.

It was a brave game, danced to all the airs in Liberty's repertoire, by Freedom's worst enemies. Men went abroad into the next street with fear and trembling. A word from any angry man could take away the liberty of his neighbour. Only the rogue was quite safe. For this we had escaped from the hands of the Prussians! They had spared our beautiful city, to look on, while our own hands should destroy it. To use the brutal remark of one of their chiefs—they watched us frying in our own fat.

Shall I ever cease to think of that morning of humiliation in my life when a picket of hang-dog fellows thrust open my door, and demanded the arms they knew to be in my possession? Madame Chose was falling on her knees to them, when I dragged her aside, and begged her to remember who and what she was, and who and what those men were. Whereupon two seized my wrists; but with a desperate twist I freed myself, and drove them back with that look of the honest man under

which every rogue quails. And then, under our eyes, they turned out every cupboard, opened every box, searched the beds, and found—not even a pop-gun. I was too old a connoisseur in revolutions to keep arms in my house. With an insolent “Good day, citoyenne” to my wife, and a parting oath for the reader’s humble servant, they went out, warning me that if it should be proved that I had even a lady’s pistol in my possession, it would go hard with me.

I lived in rage and terror. The unarmed law-abiding citizens were under the dominion of an armed rabble, the said rabble duly installed in all the public offices, issuing decrees, and giving to wholesale pillage the authority of law. The reign of topsy-turvy was begun in downright earnest, and every night I expected to find the cook in the best bed, and my wife thankful for the mercy that left her one of the attics. But neither tongue, nor pen, nor pencil could realise the suffering we endured during that second siege that closed in flames.

When it was happily ended, and the Versaillais were masters of Paris, I said to Madame Chose—who, I must confess, had borne herself bravely throughout, with the exception of the little incident I have described—“Let us thank Heaven that our lives and our goods have been spared. It was through all our frivolities as a nation, through the

dandyism of our officers, and the vanity and extravagance of our women ; through that lightness and love of pleasure which have drawn us from the serious business of life and made us merely the pleasure-caterers of the world, that we incurred a shame for either cheek—defeat and civil war. For the rest of our lives we should be sober and serious citizens.”

“You are right, Chose,” my wife answered. “I have done with finery for the rest of my life.”

How many seasons have passed over our heads since they were shooting men down under the Pont de la Concorde ? When was the last man tied to a stake before a firing party on the plain of Satory ?

I and Tonnerre were talking on the gloomy subject not many evenings ago, while waiting for Madame Chose to return for dinner. When at length she appeared, she excused herself, saying she had been detained over a very advantageous purchase. Indeed, she would have our opinion on it before she served the soup. Poor Tonnerre, who had been growling for his dinner, was compelled to say that he would not approach the table till he had seen the new garment.

“It is the very latest thing in novelties,” cried Madame Chose to us from the bedroom. Then she appeared in a new polonaise, which undoubtedly became her, as she well knew.

“Superb,” cried Tonnerre. “But what a curious tint. I never saw that brown before.”

Madame Chose laughed in her most bewitching manner as she replied: “Not seen it before; why, you’ve eaten it. It’s the latest fashion; the last tint, and nothing else will be worn this summer.”

“What do they call it, Madame?” the gallant soldier asked, holding the corner of the garment critically between his thumb and forefinger.

“Couleur pain-de-siège — siege-bread-colour!” said my wife, looking in the glass the while.

I was very angry.

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## VI.

## THE BOULEVARD GAVROCHE.

"MONSIEUR CHOSE," said my wife to me, "with your politics and principles, your régimes and constitutions, and the rest of your revolutionary baggage, I know my Paris no longer. Will you be good enough to tell me the name of the street in which I live?"

"My dear creature," I replied, with studied politeness, "I believe we inhabit the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois."

"We did yesterday," Madame retorted, as she tossed her gloves upon the table; "but have the goodness, Monsieur Chose, to step to the corner and inquire for yourself."

I obeyed. I have lived all my life in the Marais, and have seen few changes in it. The quiet business life of the place has hardly been ruffled by the political storms that have swept over our devoted city. They changed the Rue St. Louis years ago into the Rue Turenne, and we mourned over it. But I never imagined, in my wildest

dreams, that any set of men would be desperate enough to lay their hands upon the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois. Yet it is doomed; although the desecration has not yet been accomplished. While I stood at the corner gazing at the old familiar words that I could once read—ah, me!—without spectacles, Patin, the grocer, stepped up and said :

“ It is decided. We shall live henceforth, Monsieur Chose, in the Rue Pipe-en-Bois.”

“ Never ! ” I cried.

“ Yes, yes ! It is voted by the council—the representative council. It is hard to bear, Monsieur Chose, but principles must be respected.”

“ Principles ! ” I cried. “ It is infamous.”

But Monsieur Patin laid his hand upon my shoulder, and bade me observe that the council had been elected by the people. And then he said : “ The fault lies not with the voters who returned the council which to-day dooms you and me to sleep in the Rue Pipe-en-Bois, but with the citizens who did not vote.”

The observation of Monsieur Patin was just, and I returned home ashamed of myself for having wasted my right as a municipal elector. I found Captain Tonnerre having a brisk conversation with my wife. As I entered, they both turned upon me, and cried with one voice, “ Well, well, where do you live now ? ”

Captain Tonnerre was not to be calmed.

“My dear Chose, it seems that we have been living under the most extraordinary errors. You and I are fools; but there is this consolation, we are part of a mighty company. I had an idea that Napoleon was the great captain of his age; that his nephew freed Italy on the battle-field of Solferino; that Isly, and Magenta, and Sebastopol were French victories; that Bayard was a pure Christian knight, of whom France was proud; that Henri Quatre was a hero dear to the Gauls; that, in short, we had deeds of valour and men of courage enough to glorify the streets of Paris and London rolled into one. Confess, Chose, that you were vain enough to cherish this patriotic idea under your flannel waistcoat.”

“I confess it, and,” I added with emphasis and, I hope, with dignity, “I maintain it now.”

“Nonsense, Monsieur Chose. As a politician you know better. We are just going to begin the proper history of France. I have lived all my life (when not fighting for my country) on the Isle of St. Louis; to-morrow I shall be an inhabitant of the Isle St. Adolphe, and my shortest way to it will be by the Boulevard Gavroche. They are scraping St. Louis, the third and fourth Henrys, and fearless Bayard, and the man of Austerlitz, and the man of Solferino, and Saint-Arnaud of the Alma, ay, and Macmahon (while he lives) from the

walls. The Abbatuccis, who, from father to son, have died on the field of honour—so says my military history—have not a name good enough to figure upon a blind alley. The Empress Josephine is a myth; the beautiful Hortense a crazy poet's dream. You thought our army was covered with glory, and that its glittering legions had, within the memory of men still living, swept triumphantly through Europe. What vanity, Monsieur Chose! French knights have yet their spurs to win. The Napoleon legend is as unsubstantial as that of the Wandering Jew. Five years ago you used to say that it commanded the respect of the world. What nonsense! They are pulling it from the walls like an old play-bill, and the soldiers are looking on! This is surely enough to prove to you that you have wasted two-thirds of your life in the bewildering darkness of error. Do you hear me, Monsieur Chose?"

"It is a humiliating result of the elective principle, I admit," was my answer.

"Elective idiotcy!" was Madame Chose's exclamation.

"Elective principle!" Tonnerre retorted. The old soldier who had fought with the père Bugeaud, and had ended his active career before the Mamelon, shook with emotion. "Your elective principle and your equality are pretty! Your savans have a grand debate whether they shall call a certain



prince monseigneur, while your deputies banish another across the frontier. While one pretender gives a banquet to the forty Immortals in the heart of Paris, another is not allowed to travel through the country. You talk about republican simplicity, and the extravagance of the fallen dynasty ; and the *couturières* tell you that never in the gayest of the "twenty years of corruption" did a dress cost much more than half one of the present fashion. You must even have two suppers to a ball. The streets are unsafe. They seize your newspapers—three at a time. We soldiers are insulted in the streets. Every unfortunate officer is a traitor. "Capitular ! " cries the gamin at the heels of troopers who fought at Magenta. "Traitor !" is the sound that falls upon the ears of every officer who has been unfortunate. In the old days the vanquished warrior was treated with chivalrous respect ; to-day you stone him."

"What will they do to-morrow ? Perhaps Monsieur Chose can tell us." Madame Chose made this observation with marked severity.

I protested, being roused by her sarcasm in the presence of Tonnerre, that I had no satisfactory explanation to offer.

"Then, my friend Chose," Tonnerre said, still panting with excitement, and sopping his heated brows with his handkerchief, "permit me to ask you, what becomes of all this study of the politics

of your time ? You read the papers all round, even to the *Polisson Illustré*—a charming print ; and when we are threatened with the re-christening of Paris from Passy to Vincennes, you haven't a word of comfort or explanation to give us. On what principle, let me ask you—since principle is your strong point—on what shadow of a principle is the Rue Marie-Antoinette to be called the Rue Antoinette ? ” The old soldier folded his arms, and paused for a reply.

“ I don't pretend to be the key of the position, my good Tonnerre,” I observed. “ As well ask me to explain why a journalist the other day likened the Obelisk of Luxor to a parfait au café ; or why, a few years ago, they copied it as a stripe for the gandins' trousers. But surely you can understand that there are men of base and vain minds, who delight in degrading everything that has gone before them, and would blot out Raphael's Virgin to make a canvas for their own portrait. They want the deluge before them and behind them. The logical consequence of the rebaptism of Paris is the repainting of the historical portraits in the Louvre. There are admirable canvases there, upon which Bergeret, and Pyat, and the rest of the Immortals of the gutter, might be limned. Let us be logical.”

“ There he is again with his logic,” cried my wife : I am sure chiefly to please Tonnerre.

"Let Chose develop his idea, Madame," the brave soldier interposed.

"Let us," I was observing, when Madame Chose interrupted me, "'be logical.'" Here I bowed with impressive gravity to my wife, who shrugged her shoulders. "Why end at the street corners? Why not take down our shop signs, and turn the Belle Jardinière into the Belle Petroleuse, the Deux Magots into the Deux Hugos, the Grand Condé into the Grande Incendie? When they have rebaptised our streets and shops, and transformed the city, until the reign of Rochefort and Vermersch is marked upon every lamp-post, why, pray, should not they rebaptise us?"

Madame Chose started to her feet, and with a comprehensive curtesy, swept out of the room. The bare idea was too much for her. But I continued: "If they may scratch our history out of our public monuments, use the flags we have taken from the enemy as republican pocket-handkerchiefs, and haul down our trophies, they may surely tear pages out of our school histories, and teach the young idea to look upon Wagram and Austerlitz, Sebastopol and Solferino, as myths that beguiled Frenchmen in the infancy of the nation."

I had reached this point of my observations when we were interrupted by a smart rap at the door. Monsieur Patin stood before us. The poor man was breathless.

While we begged him to tell us the news, we implored him to be calm, and take his own time.

"It's carried by a majority of ten. Paris is no longer Paris!"

"The man's raving mad!" shouted Tonnerre. "Explain yourself, sir. These are not times for jesting."

"Alas, there is no jest in me, mon capitaine," Patin now said, in tones of profound melancholy. "They have carried it, I tell you. My next-door neighbour has come from the sitting. Paris is Paris no longer."

"Is it Bagdad?" I asked, really provoked by Patin's procrastination.

"No, no. They had changed the streets, the avenues, the squares, the places, but that was not enough."

Tonnerre growled some fearful oaths, and would have seized Patin by the throat had he delayed his revelation another moment.

"What have the rascals changed now?" he roared.

"Paris! For the future, the city is to be called—Belleville! And the Seine is to be the Bièvre!"

"The very gudgeon will die with shame," said my wife, who had re-entered the room, attracted by the loud voices.

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## VII.

## MADAME CHOSE AT VERSAILLES.

“A SET of unruly boys at play ; that is my opinion, Chose, and none of your fine phrases will move me from it.”

I had, in an imprudent moment, consented to take Madame Chose to be present at a debate in the National Assembly. While we were on the way to Versailles, I repented, for I saw that she was bent upon presenting all she saw to her friends in a diverting light ; and that she was arming herself with a fresh weapon against me—which was not necessary. We assisted at a debate in the course of which there were two or three warm incidents ; but these, or, more properly speaking, the reasons for these, passed almost unnoticed by the severe critic who is my permanent censor. It was as we came through the corridors of the palace, and just as we were passing a corner roughly canvassed off for the Official Journal, that madame put down the wise men of her country as so many unruly school-boys. She pointed with her

parasol to the canvas partition, and added, contemptuously :

“ There is du propre ! ”

It was very dirty, more like a gipsy's stabling than the head-quarters of the parliamentary staff of the Official Journal of France. It smote villainously upon the practised eye of one who prides herself on her order and love of cleanliness. I endeavoured to keep the subject at a distance by suggesting to my wife that an ice would probably refresh her before taking train for Paris. She accepted the ice, but she declined to adjourn the expression of her opinion on the afternoon to which, as she kindly said, I had “ doomed ” her. I had played many tricks upon her knowingly and unwittingly, but never had she been disturbed, and dragged away to Versailles, and stuffed in a seat not big enough for a child ten years old, on so shallow a pretext as this.

“ I shall have some news to tell to-day, Monsieur Chose. Yes, some news to tell about—a half-empty theatre ; a sculpture corridor treated like a high-road ; a set of shabby fellows lounging about, where splendid officials were intended to be ; a scramble up dark stairs to boxes that were clean once upon a time. You say the deputies were elated by the prospect of breaking up to-morrow for the Easter holidays ; but is that any reason why they should behave like bears ? For my part,

I think they would do vastly well under a tent in the Court of Honour, instead of being allowed to turn a place built for the amusement of kings into a fool's paradise, where everyone wants to hear himself speak. I remember a time, Monsieur Chose, when you would have been ashamed to let your wife drive up to the gates of the palace in a tumble-down omnibus. To-day I was jolted almost to death, and was ready to drop when, after all that ridiculous ceremony, I was shown to the avant-scenes to see a little of the modelling of the destinies of France."

In this way Madame Chose entertained me all the way back to Paris, where we expected Captain Tonnerre to dine with us.

"Beware how you touch upon the Assembly," I said to the captain while we took our absinthe, and Madame changed her toilette. "She is furious, and I am very sorry I took her. It has destroyed the little confidence she had in our legislators. I shall suffer for it."

The captain smiled, and was gallant enough to say that Madame was a woman of extraordinary perceptive powers. I take it there is nobody who enjoys the extraordinary powers of a lady less than that lady's husband. I implored my friend to encourage the comments of Madame Chose as little as politeness would permit. But my precaution was in vain. The spirit of Madame Chose had been,

as the captain observed, profoundly stirred, and not even the President himself would have kept her silent. I was put aside, and Madame addressed herself exclusively to Tonnerre.

“When I had got over my vexation at being dragged so far to see so little, I passed my opera-glass over boxes and pit. By the way, there ought to be a gallery for Monsieur Gambetta’s clients. Well, your National Assembly looked very like a half-deserted theatre. They have not taken the trouble to remove the proscenium. There are the big angels holding a prodigious crown over the fleur de lys—above the heads of the Left and Right Centres—just as they did in the days of the Grand Monarch. The stage is a stage still, with the foot-lights removed; I presume, to keep the way clear when the Radicals want to rush at the throat of a plain-speaking Rural. The tribune faces the audience, and above the tribune appears the President. The background is a common red drop-scene. Even the entrances are, as you see them, upon the stage. Monsieur Thiers, with the rest of the saviours of France, sits on the first pit bench fronting the tribune; I suppose, so that they may not lose a word of the bad language that is prepared for them. Every minute I expected to see a chorus or a file of retainers come on, or even a corps de ballet, to relieve the comedy. For nobody was listening to the speaker, who had perched himself



in the tribune, with a file of papers, and was, I suppose, unfolding the contents of them in a voice that just rose now and then beyond the general conversation. The pit was half empty, but the men who were there were lounging, chattering, reading, or writing, as though they were not in the least degree concerned in the subject the person in the tribune was talking about, except that now and then some word brought the entire company into action. I heard the word 'barricade' fall from a speaker's lips. Then the crowd in the pit on the left all roared together; a little forest of fists was raised towards the tribune; the speaker folded his arms defiantly; the crowd on the right applauded as though Patti had just made her appearance; and above all, the shouting and clapping of hands, the President rang a bell. It was like the main avenue of a fair on a Sunday. A drum would have completed the illusion. The remembrance of it gives me a headache. Fetch me my salts, Chose."

The salts having unfortunately revived my wife, she began to laugh heartily, saying that the entire scene was the very drollest thing in the world. "You must know," she continued, still addressing Tonnerre, "that every possible precaution is taken, lest, in the noise and confusion, some of the golden words spoken by the person in the tribune should be lost to posterity. They are obliged to plant a shorthand writer on the right and left of the

speaker ; yes, at his two elbows, and there, poor fellows, they stand with their books in their hands, writing away as hard as they can go, till two more come to relieve them. Chose said they were relieved so frequently, because they must have time to write out their notes ; but I know better—it is to prevent them from going mad under the torrent of nonsense that is poured into their devoted ears.

“ You cannot imagine, Monsieur, the games the deputies carried on. I never heard such rude interruptions. Manners ! When the crowd on the left was agitated, the uproar was deafening, and every man seemed ready to make short work of his neighbour. But the President rang them down, appealed to them like naughty children, and, while a group of men were shaking hands with, and hugging, the person who had just finished his glass of water, and left the tribune ; another candidate for the inattention of the Assembly went up the steps. It was quite like a drama. As the new performer took his place, a lacquey came on from the opposite side of the stage, carrying a tumbler of water upon a plate, which he deposited near the hand of the honourable opponent of the man who was being hugged.

“ Then the play went forward another scene. The same shouting, talking, clapping of hands, rude remarks, and walking about. Papers strewn, like bills of the play, all over the pit ; people

yawning in the boxes ; men clambering over seats ; and the very largest collection of bald heads I ever saw under one roof. I should say that a reception at the Institute could not muster such a show."

"And pray," Tonnerre here ventured to ask, "what was the subject of debate to-day?"

"Monsieur Tonnerre," my wife replied, in a most charming voice, "is that a serious question? Do you think there were twenty people in the theatre who distinctly understood the subject in hand?"

I had resolved to bear no part whatever in the conversation ; but this was too much for me.

"It is too bad, Madame, to exaggerate that which is, unfortunately, only too ludicrous when soberly described. The subject was——"

"Monsieur Chose, the captain asked me the question. Permit me to answer it. You will have opportunities enough for reflections on the ideas of a foolish woman at your café. I have no doubt I appear atrociously stupid to your majestic understanding."

I bowed, and left the field open.

"Monsieur," my wife went on, addressing herself to Tonnerre, "I hope I am not very much more stupid than the average of human creatures ; but I do declare to you that beyond a vague notion that some money was to be given to Paris, and that it was in consequence of the war, I could make out nothing. Some said the idea was infamous, that it

was a premium to ruffianism, and others were very magnificent indeed about noble Paris, and were very angry that the pittance of a few millions was not quadrupled. If the Right are correct, the Left are fools, and something very much worse ; and if the Left have reason on their side, the Right are both immoral and incompetent. The copper and the kettle were both black, and were bumping against one another all the time I was at Versailles. That's my experience, and I can only wonder what the foreigners in the diplomatic box thought of the sooty warfare. Monsieur Chose will tell you that it was magnificent, when one gentleman, having said that France was still great and glorious (which we all know), swallowed a whole tumbler of cold water, and resigned himself to the embraces of his friends. I thought, like a foolish housewife that I am, some of that water might have been used to wash away the dirt that had been flying about. For, after all, Monsieur Tonnerre, haven't we had enough of this abuse ? Isn't it time to cease from attributing the lowest motives to political opponents ? Because you don't approve the principle on which your friend levies taxes, do you think it quite fair or honourable to accuse him of filling his pockets from the till ? '

Tonnerre made a profound bow, while he answered :

" You are quite right, Madame. Our army has

suffered as much from the slander of friends as from the guns of the foe. You must have remarked a grave face, well-known and well-loved, in a box by the stage."

"The Marshal! He looked sad and worn while the uproar went on."

"Do you think he has not suffered under this hail of calumnies, more than tongue can tell?"

"Yes, yes," Madame Chose answered, enthusiastically; "I am sure of it. And not a woman in all the theatre who did not rejoice to see that he was looking on."

"You are really a dangerous person," I observed seriously to Madame Close; "and I beg you will change the conversation. Tonnerre, you owe me a revenge—at dominoes. Let us play."

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## VIII.

## AT DOMINOES.

“MADAME CHOSE is quite right,” Tonnerre ventured to remark to me, while, with his long fingers, he shuffled the dominoes. “Look at Genest’s way of arranging the government of the 4th of September. The first, Monsieur de Rochefort, is at the bague. The second, Monsieur Jules Simon, is Minister of Public Instruction. The third, Monsieur Gambetta, is the hope of France. The fourth, Monsieur J. Favre, is called a forger by the third. The fifth, Monsieur Cremieux, is outraged by the second. The sixth and seventh are ambassadors. The eighth, Monsieur Trochu, is dragged through the mud by the first, the third, and the fifth. The ninth, Monsieur Glais-Bizoin, is spurned by all the rest. It’s ignoble, Chose. Is there an honest man left in France? Your play.”

“Upon my word, Tonnerre, your sympathy with womankind will end by warping your judgment.” I made this answer angrily. “Not that I can

agree with the people who cry treason everywhere ; and never believe a man is unfortunate, but always that the fallen man is a rogue. I wish I had the spirits of Cham. He can always laugh. The country is on the verge of another revolution, because Monsieur Thiers is indisposed. Let him cut his finger, and the funds will run down. Cham prescribes a new constitution for France under which the President will be bound by law to show his tongue three times a day, to prevent financial crises on the Bourse. The laughter over national disaster is the puzzling part of my country's politics to me. The Tuileries are a charred ruin. Are we ashamed of it? No. Two clever fellows pass. One suggests it would make a first-rate museum—of draughts ! There is catarrh in every angle of it. I shiver at the jest."

" We must be more serious, Chose. It is your play. We must get rid of the funny gentlemen who will hang their little jests upon the funeral car of their dearest friend. It is our curse that we are so spirituel. I play."

Tonnerre is right. " I had a lively ride a few days ago with half a dozen deputies. They were in the highest spirits, although the fortunes of the country were at a low ebb ; and indulged in some very witty speculations. One honourable farceur suggested a compromise of all existing difficulties. ' Give,' said he, ' the presidency of the Senate to

the Count of Chambord ; the chairmanship of the Council of State to the Duke of Aumale ; and the presidential fauteuil of the Deputies to the Prince Imperial, and thus, with the Little Man president for life, all susceptibilities would be satisfied, and we should run upon wheels, each of us with a fair bit of the cake in his hands.' ”

“ The rascals ! ” growled Tonnerre. “ I can't play. It's the bit of cake they're all running after, while the workpeople want bread.”

“ It's a game of devil-take-the-hindmost,” was my observation, and I gave Tonnerre an instance that had come within my own knowledge. “ Some fifty years ago two young men came to Paris from the south, one was named Beaume, the other Thiers. They dined together at a twenty-two sous restaurant. Beaume was an artist, Thiers an art-critic. They were chums, and in the beginning Beaume had the advantage, for he had great talent as an artist, whereas his friend was but a poor art-critic. Beaume used to say to Adolphe, “ You know as much about art as my slipper.” That was true ; but Thiers had more than one string to his bow. And so he struck off in a new direction, leaving the artist, who had only one string, far behind him. Beaume is still an artist of merit, and has been a knight of the Legion of Honour for thirty years ; but how many people have heard of his talent ? But who has not heard of the little art-critic who



knew no more about pictures fifty years ago than his chum's slipper ? The art-critic is President of us all, and his old companion is not certain of a corner in the Salon. We are all players of the same game, Tonnerre, with France for our stage. When you tell me a certain man is a patriot, I say he is a winner. When Monsieur Patin put up the other day for the Municipal Council, and issued that flowery manifesto, and when he was opposed by that incendiary chemist, Guimauve, with his red posters—what did we see ? ”

“ Two faiseurs d'embarras—two saltimbanques,” was Tonnerre's prompt reply.

“ True ; two runners in the race of devil-take-the-hindmost. Patin pretended that he had reluctantly put down his bags of brown sugar to serve his country in the hour of her peril ; while Guimauve aired himself as a sacrifice to the triumph of democratic ideas.”

“ Bah ! ” growled Tonnerre, “ you are neglecting the game, Chose. The double six.”

But I would not be diverted from my point by dominoes. “ We want unselfishness in these times ; we want heart ; we want courage. This fencing with tongues ; these fights and plots of the infinitely Little ; these ignoble compromises which bring the Patins and the Guimauves to the front ; these gods from the gutters ; this drinking of sugar and water, and phrase-making over unhappy France ; these

dances of death to the air of Ça Ira mean national annihilation."

"Chose," said Tonnerre, presently, when I had beaten him, and when he was paying our reckoning, "I should advise you, my friend, to be more circumspect in your observations on passing events. It is you bourgeois who are the cause of every one of the evils you deplore. You chatter like monkeys, when you should be acting like men. Do you know what is happening ; nay, shall I ask, do you know what has happened ?"

I waited to hear in silence. I shall never forget the solemnity and agitation with which the old man spoke.

"Cannot you see it, man ?" The wrinkled hand, scarred with a sabre-cut dealt by a Muscovite sword, while it held the flag of France in the front of battle, was pointed to the street. "You see nothing ; but I see the clear outline of the ragged figure. From its cruel eyes to its flat feet, it is covered with red rags—made of the standards it has soiled and torn. The teeth are clenched like those of a hungry tiger. Was ever a more brutal caricature of a human head ? The hair is matted upon the low skull. Mark the knotted sinews of the bull-throat. The lean, ignoble figure is all angles. The gnarled joints are of monstrous size. Blood drips from the nails of the fingers. The legs are muddy to the knees. The feet seek the

line of route where the dirt is thickest and slimiest. The point of a knife and the barrel of a pistol peep through the red rags. Cowards that they are—the crowd make way for the monster while he walks. The respectable citizens scowl, and hold their noses, and turn their backs; but not one lays a hand upon the brute.\* And pray, Monsieur Chose, great critic of modern politics, whither, think you, is that pestilent wretch bound?”

I confessed my inability even to hazard a conjecture.

“To the workshops. To the houses of the poor. To the cabins of the match-box makers of Belleville. To the skilled and intelligent cabinet-makers and bronze-workers of the east of Paris. The red rags will madden them as they stand by their lathes and benches. And then, Monsieur Chose, the bourgeois will learn another lesson, by which—cased as he is, I admit it, in self-conceit and laziness—he will profit as little as he did when that figure passed along the Boulevards a year or two ago. Hark! The Carmagnole!”

But I heard nothing, except the click of the billiard-balls at the back of the café in which we were sitting.

“You can’t hear it! Will you hear it when the

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\* Isaac Cruikshank has drawn a figure of Revolution, in many points closely resembling the captain’s.

Red Spectre plays it under your windows, summoning you to go forth and turn your pockets inside out? Do you think your deafness will cease when the Spectre's gory hand is in your watch-fob? Will your phrases be at end?"

Captain Tonnerre glared round at the guests in the café; and the growling in his throat must have been audible almost at the billiard-table. An acquaintance drew me aside to ask me what could be the matter with the old gentleman.

"A little political discussion," said I. Whereat my questioner went away laughing.

"There is another fool," said Tonnerre, when I rejoined him. "He will wait till the red hand plucks his nightcap from his head. Oh! he will talk enough between this and then, and be very valiant over his absinthe; but devil a step will he take, even to vote against the Spectre. I suppose he was laughing at my picture; but the last laugh will be mine, and I shall not have long to wait for it. So——let us have another game."

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## IX.

## THE FEATHERS OF THE EAGLE.

"BLUNDER upon blunder!" said I to Madame Chose.

"You men do nothing else," was the conjugal reply. "The Captain Tonnerre has been here in a fury. He is generally a little more reasonable than you are"—(I bowed low as my acknowledgment of the compliment)—"but to-day he is a madman."

"But what is the matter, Madame?"

"Don't ask me, Monsieur Chose. A man who is so lost as to refuse his wife point blank so pardonable a request as a friture at St. Cloud; when he has—to indulge his own ridiculous vanity—given up fishing one for her, with no better excuse than an itching to put his clumsy fingers into the State cauldron; that man—it is an act of indulgence to call him one—has lost all right not only to question his wife, but——"

Human patience had been tried too long. I brought my fist heavily down upon the table, where

my wife was arranging a prodigious bouquet of violets, and fairly shouted :

“But ! But what, Madame ? Have a care.”

“Monsieur Chose having become a thorough brute—possibly to qualify himself for an active part in politics—I leave him.” And, gathering up her flowers, she passed from the room.

But where was Tonnerre ? He had, then, heard the news ! Perhaps he was in the list of the Outraged. The bare idea made me tremble, for I knew that in the event of my surmise being correct, I should find him in one of those tumults of passion which make me fear that he will burst some day, like one of the muskets the patriotic agents of the 4th of September bought for our valiant army. I paced up and down the salon, asking myself whether it was possible to conceive a more ridiculous, and, at the same time, a more exasperating affront to a powerful section of an impatient and unsettled community ? With “liberty, equality, and fraternity” painted upon the very building ! A few old men—venerable and glorious as the flags that fluttered in the aisle ; the fast-fading remnants of an epoch that was at any rate a grand one ; the sabreurs of Austerlitz ; the half-score of witnesses to the glory of France, who were still on the right side of the cemetery gates ; to slam the gates——

But here Madame Chose thrust her head into the salon, and, with the exquisite politeness that

cuts like a surgeon's knife—only with no such honourable object—had the temerity to call my attention to the fact that our neighbours underneath us (with whom we were already not on good terms, because the water from our flower-pots had lately given an untimely douche to one of their friends) would probably tell the concierge, who would tell all the house, that Monsieur Chose had gone mad. “I should have thought,” my discreet wife added, “that you had quite enough of speech-making at your club. But, perhaps, they have shut it up?”

“Shut up the White Mice! The club of respectability, where no man is admitted who doesn't wear spectacles, and no man can preside whom Nature has not gifted with a brutus! Madame! your pleasantry is in the worst taste, especially at this moment; and, permit me the liberty of adding, very silly.”

“In a course of political study, I long ago discovered, Monsieur Chose, that gallantry to women was not included. I am sure I wonder how Captain Tonnerre has managed to remember something of the bienséances, while he has been under your august protection as a sucking saviour of his country. But he has contrived to retain a little good sense for his own personal use, at the risk of injuring his country by the loss of it. He is no longer a White Mouse!”

With this shot, which struck home, Madame closed the door of her chamber. Tonnerre no longer a White Mouse! The thing was impossible! He was among the earliest members. He was of the committee of organisation. He was one of the founders. No, no, this was merely a poisoned shaft from Madame Chose's capacious quiver. Now, if ever, the White Mice should stand together—as one mouse. The times were critical indeed when men went about with liberty upon their lips and gaoler's keys in their pockets; when young conscripts could be found to slap the faces of the tottering heroes of our mightiest story; when——

At this moment Madame Chose returned to the salon, her daintily-arrayed head covered with her best capuchon, and fan and lorgnette and bonbonnière in hand.

"I am going to the Opera, and then *en soirée*, Monsieur Chose," she said, in a silvery voice; "perhaps it is daring too much to request you to see me to a carriage."

"Madame, I am always at your service. But first tell me about Captain Tonnerre. You say he went off in a fury. I can very well understand it."

"Then, to a politician of your acuteness, there can be nothing to explain; and I am already very late."

My wife moved with determined steps towards



the door, and I followed her; hoping by my politeness to elicit from her the cause of Tonnerre's exasperation—though I was almost sure about it.

"Yes, he has heard of the outrage, and his soldier's heart——"

"Is Monsieur Chose rehearsing his speech for the club?" my wife asked, taking my arm as we reached the courtyard; and giving me her perfumed impedimenta (including the bouquet of violets) to carry. Women can stab you and ask you to hold their shawl at the same moment.

"Ah, Felicie!" I responded (a kiss sometimes hits harder than a blow), "you cannot sympathise with all I feel at this moment. I am bleeding, inwardly, for my country."

"Then be thankful that it is inwardly, *mon ami*," was the reply I heard; and the "*mon ami*" sent the blood tingling in my ears; for it was the first time since I had cast my fishing-tackle aside that I had heard those words. Why was I not going *en soirée* also? I was on the point of murmuring my regret, when a sharp tug at my arm, and an exclamation to the effect that it was hardly possible to be more stupid than I was in the vital conjugal matter of getting cabs, recalled me to my hard self, and in a minute I was settling Madame Chose in a coupé.

"There, that will do: tell the driver where to go." The window was about to be drawn up in my

face, when I put my hand resolutely upon it, and said :

“ At least, Madame, tell me what Tonnerre said, for he must have left some message : and, where can I find him ? ”

With a movement of impatience Madame Chose replied, “ Well, he said, in his mad way and your mad way too, that they had scattered the feathers of the eagle ; but that every quill would be made into a pen of revenge. Make what you can out of that. *Allez cocher !* ”

It was easy enough to translate. Tonnerre had been on the spot, and seen the old men shouldered from the temple. But why, on this account, should he leave the White Mice ? Why separate himself from the friends of Order, at the very moment when order was most threatened ? Yesterday he was for a republic because it separated men least ; and for a variety of reasons that, although they were altered, and chopped about every time the club met, were moderately good ones. To be sure his was a peculiar republic ; a republic, as he cleverly expressed it, in which republicanism showed itself the least ; and when it took the form of outrage upon his beloved Old Guard, he would be likely to drop it like a hot chestnut. But where should I find him ? Sleep would be impossible until I had seen, and comforted my old friend. I searched at the meeting-place of the

White Mice: he had not been there. I went to the café where he occasionally met his military friends. I trotted off to the establishment where we generally played our game of dominoes, and took our absinthe. No Captain Tonnerre. At last I resolved to seek him in his own rooms, by the Champs de Mars, that dusty plain being, as he expressed it, his Bois de Boulogne, lake, cascade and all.

He was at home, the concierge said; but she thought he looked very ill when he came in; and when she spoke to him he gave her no answer. I hastened to his fourth floor, and rang. I waited, but heard nobody stirring within. After a long pause I mustered courage to ring a second time. His growl and the clanking of metal thrown aside were the immediate response, followed by his heavy footsteps and his muttered anger. He threw the door wide open and roared:

“Who is it at this hour?”

“I hope, my good friend, I am not indiscreet.”

He turned his back, and told me to shut the door and follow him.

It was a superb picture, perfect in every detail. I don't think Meissonnier would have altered a single accessory, or a play of light. The old soldier—his pipe in his mouth, his shirt-sleeves tucked up, an old kepi upon his head, with the peak over his ear—was giving the final touches to

his accoutrements. His sword, as he fondly rubbed it, was a dancing mirror.

“Well,” he grunted, without lifting his eyes, “you have heard the news, or you would not be here. *Infames!*”

I confessed that I had learned it with profound sorrow.

“And after?” He still polished the sword that was speckless.

“After! Is it true you have left the club?”

“Is it true that I am Captain Tonnerre?” the old man roared. “I was of the White Mice: idiot that I was. Is this the weapon to chop logic with? With their reasons and counter-reasons, their changes and counter-changes, their fine words for themselves and foul epithets for everybody else; I ought to have known I was out of place; and that their tricks would be played some day even upon the two or three braves time has left us. But to-day, Monsieur Chose, Captain Tonnerre, who is speaking to you, is of THE TIGERS!”

And Captain Tonnerre gripped the hilt of his sword with a power far from contemptible.

“We have picked up the feathers, Monsieur Chose, and these are our penknives.”

I jumped out of the reach of the flashing sabre.

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## X.

## THE WHITE MICE.

THERE are mice and mice—but there are no red mice. I had laid this down, I may say it without incurring the charge of vanity, in the most successful manner, at one of the early meetings of our club. “Just,” I continued, “as there are black, and brown, and grey, and tan dogs; but red, none—except those which the dyers disfigure.” Then I drew a comparison between the field-mouse, the mouse that lives in our wainscots, and upon our bread and sugar; and the white mouse, speckless, dainty, and much given to comfortable quarters of cotton-wool. I was much applauded for the deductions I made from the arrangements of Nature in the—to the shallow—unimportant matter of mice. And my proposition, with which I concluded, that our club should be called the White Mice, was carried with two dissentients; and these, I am grieved to say, were my own friend and nominee, Tonnerre, and Patin, my neighbour and grocer.

Patin maintained that mice, whether white or grey, were a predatory tribe. They were thieves, and with all the instincts of thieves, from their noses to their tails; cowardly, with sharp teeth; hungry, and yet industrious only at a flour sack, or in the corner of a cupboard.

Tonnerre was of opinion that they were simply ridiculous creatures, fashioned by Providence, no doubt, for some very sound and sufficient reason; but for a reason still undiscovered by man. Therefore he could not perceive either the wit or the *à propos* of my idea. He could understand the Lions, the Tigers, or the Eagles. At the mention of the noble bird, Patin indulged in a gesture of disapprobation that moved the wrath of the captain.

"Sir," said he, "when the eagle falls from his eyrie, he falls like a thunderbolt, and your faces grow white behind your counters. What does the rat do? He runs away till the noise is over, and then crawls back—to nibble again. He will plant his teeth in the lips of Cæsar dead; feast while the house is in mourning; but let one in Cæsar's house be well astir, and he is off again, fat with the corruption he has swallowed. Your rats are feasting to-day."

Monsieur Patin retorted: "At least they are respectable rats."

"Respectable!—respectable, to push a claim

upon a sick man ! Respectable, to plunge their hands in the pockets of one just struck with paralysis ! Respectable, to air their millions, and bring out their old liveries and middle-class ostentation, before France in tears ! Respectable——”

But here the man of war was stopped. He had forgotten all about the mice, the rats, and the rest of the origin of the discussion, and would have drawn us all into a pretty quarrel, had I not recalled his attention to Rule Ten, which forbade personal politics.

The White Mice were drawn together on a patriotic platform. We were essentially a bourgeois club. Our mission was to study the current of events, through a critical period of our beloved country's history ; and to keep it clear of the demagogues. We were a band of anti-democrats. We regarded ourselves as superior intelligences, bound, by our very superiority, to do our utmost to save society. Hence we were the White Mice : natural leaders of the commoner tribes, or varieties. It was a rule that members should never be addressed as Monsieur, but always as Mus. In formally referring to, or addressing a member of our patriotic body, he was called “the Honourable Mus.” Tonnerre vowed that it was absurd, illogical, and that it laid us open to the shafts of our enemies' ridicule ; but he was silenced by an overwhelming vote at a general meeting. I asked

him whether we should address one another as "citizen"?

"The first man who addresses me in that way," was his reply, "will have to give me a very good reason for his impertinence. But why not, 'Monsieur,' as in the ordinary intercourse of gentlemen?"

Captain Tonnerre was a rough soldier, without the smallest imagination, or the faintest idea of the unities, or of the fitness of things. The quick, intelligent, sensitive mind has always delighted in quaint forms, and becoming ceremonies, that give relief to the humdrum of daily life. I insisted that when I was addressed as the Honourable Mus, there was a flutter in me; and I was stirred to remember all my obligations as one of the White Mice. I acted accordingly. I was removed from the common level of men; and felt that I was helping to drive my country in the right direction. Not that as a body we made much progress, or often took action. We were all agreed—to a Mus—as to the desirability of stemming the tide of democracy; but some were for round plugs, and some were for square; some for a plaster over the mouth, and some for a gun-metal wall.

The absinthes panachés and pure; the grogs, American and otherwise; the choppes of beer of Lyons as well as of Bavaria; the hot wines and the cold wines; the vermouths and the cassis; the



sugared water, and the barley water ; the groseilles and the bavaroises, we consumed over our patriotic debates, were indeed many. I remarked on one occasion, in a moment of despair, that it appeared to me the only person we were solidly benefiting by our deliberations, was the honourable Mus Cruche, our worthy landlord and colleague. There was a good deal of laughter over my sally, in which Mus Cruche joined heartily ; but I took occasion to observe afterwards to Tonnerre, there was matter for serious reflection in it as well. Events were succeeding one another with a rapidity only equalled by the repeated replenishments of Courbet's beer-mug ; and there were we meeting day after day, talking over, and often quarrelling over, but never coming to, a resolution on which action could be grounded.

Every Mus came away from business with a doleful account of his trading. Patin had become insupportable with his growling. Bibelot never filled his pipe without telling us that the country was going to the devil. We debated a national bankruptcy while the waiter was fetching a game of bezique. Between two billiard strokes Collet Montet asked me how long I thought we were from a general break up ? And Titus Blanc observed, while he brushed his hat, that nothing could save us now from the canaille. "Decidedly," said I to Tonnerre at last, "the White Mice are degenerating."

“Not at all, my dear Chose,” said Tonnerre. “I don’t see the very smallest change. It’s a little fresh to you, Chose, because until that day when you ceased to frequent the banks of the Seine, you had remained a sensible bourgeois, leaving your governments, like your bread, to be made for you—only reserving to yourself the right of grumbling when the price got extravagant. But directly you, and thousands of your condition, began to dabble in constitution-making, you made fools of yourselves. Leave the bread to the baker.”

“What ! Tonnerre,” I cried, “live like a beast of the field, without a thought about the happiness of those who are to come after me.”

“Those who come after you would gain by the arrangement. What do the White Mice want ?” Here the captain swore an awful oath that he didn’t know. “I have been a White Mouse to please you, my old friend ; and I have assisted at your discussions ; only to confirm me in my opinion that no reliance is to be placed in you. There are the canaille getting the upper hand. They turn the corner while you turn an epigram, and, usually, a very indifferent one into the bargain. Words ! Speeches ! Speeches ! You could fill the Imperial Library once a year with your orations ; but you have not a single wholesome movement to your back. On the voting days, when the canaille are crowding the mairies, the White Mice lie snug in

their wool. You talk about order, but the only order you give is—to the waiter. What is the result? why that the Chief of the State is obliged to count with the rabble; and then when, through your poltroonery, there seems to be imminent danger of a democratic raid upon your shops and houses—we are called in. The Bourse becomes firm at the sound of the drum.”

“But,” said I, glad to catch Tonnerre upon his own ground, “even the drummers are divided. There are Cæsar’s drumsticks, there are the drumsticks of Divine Right; and there are the dirty drumsticks of Nondescript Right—of Right gained by duplicity and family treachery, and by mean arts veneered with constitutionalism. A throne of cotton-backed velvet; a plated sceptre; a diadem glittering with cailloux du Rhin—with a large family of mediocrities quarrelling over even this shabby heritage—is a scandal and a shame to France. Rather give me the republic than the sound of the drummers of the National Guard—with no more authority behind them than is represented by the Hotel des Haricots.”

“Ugh! They’re scheming to get back the old shop—where their father made so much money. I’m glad, at any rate, Chose, you are not rowing in that galley, with the rest of the White Mice.”

“With the rest of the White Mice, Tonnerre! You do them an injustice. There is an O, not as

round as that of Giotto ; and they know it—with the exception of a wretched little Mus or two, that should never have been admitted to our circle.”

“ The O you mean is a circle that has been held up by saltimbanques and has been broken, past repair, by the clumsy clowns who have jumped through it. Still some of the Mice are nibbling at the tatters.”

“ Never mind the few ! ” I cried, “ think of the attitude of the many.”

“ Alas ! my poor Chose, I only see the various attitudes in which men sip absinthe.”

“ A Scotch poet has observed something to this effect,” I pursued, “ that the best-laid schemes of mice and men may fail.”

“ Chose,” Captain Tonnerre said, with much solemnity, “ since you gave up gudgeon-fishing to prepare yourself to be fished for as a gudgeon, you have never shown a more dangerous symptom than I discover in your last observation. When poetry is brought to bear upon politics, it is time for the gendarmerie to saddle.”

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## XI.

## THE LITTLE MAN IS STILL KICKING.

*Petit bonhomme vit encore !* They have thrust him into a corner ; turned his luggage out of the presidency ; and helped him into private life with a few kicks. The bitter cup he filled some three years ago for other lips, is raised to his own mouth. The caricaturists whom he encouraged, when they were engaged upon his foe, are pouring acid over the grotesque outline of his own little figure. His day of darkness has come ; and they are laughing the length of the Boulevards at his discomfiture, The paper for whose editor he was an illustrious statesman yesterday, to-day gives a merry anecdote of his concierge.

A fruiterer called at the residence in which the bonhomme took refuge when the Assembly gave him his congé. The fruiterer was bearing early peaches to "eminent" lips ; and, impressed with the importance of his mission, was proceeding up the principal stair-case of the hotel, when he was

summoned by the concierge to halt. Why was he not ascending the servants' stair-case? The tradesman replied that he was carrying some fruit to the great man, and had been requested to take it direct—by the main entrance. An altercation ensued, the noise of which drew forth an old gentleman in slippers and dressing-gown, who begged that the fruit might be at once delivered to him.

“Who is that issuing orders?” cried the indignant concierge.

“It is I, Monsieur Thiers.”

The concierge answered with an expression of contemptuous refusal, and thrust the fruiterer to the servants' entrance.

Is it not vastly entertaining? and is it not encouraging for the bonhomme's successor? Yesterday he was on an equality with kings; and now watch him imploring in vain the good graces of his porter! Behold “the liberator of the territory” the object of a thousand calumnies! He whose catarrh lately made a panic on the Exchange, may die now as soon as he pleases: the sooner the better, if he desire the momentary honour of a public funeral. His secretary is grieved for remaining his friend. The reign of Adolphe is eclipsed; and as he fades from the public sight, there is hardly a word of regret, or of respect, or of thanks, for his many years of service, for his courage and his genius, of which he was prodigal in the hours of his country's

peril. The author of many errors ; the passionate partisan who helped to his very utmost to drive the Empire into a disastrous war, and who never spared his foe when that foe was vanquished and overladen with sorrow ; the implacable hater of the Nephew whose Uncle he had made the means of his fame as an historian ; and the enemy of England and of free trade—Adolphe Thiers was still an illustrious servant of his countrymen. I moved this as a proposition at a meeting of the White Mice which took place on the morrow of the first President's fall, to beg Captain Tonnerre to withdraw his resignation. But we passed to the order of the day without adopting it ; and when I told Tonnerre of the fate of my proposition he vowed that, even if he risked my friendship, he would not again put his foot in the club-room.

“At last,” said he, “we can go to bed in safety. We have stuck the radicaile to the barrack-gates, as you nail a barn-door owl to the barn door. We have now A MAN over us who will not swing like a pendulum from right to left. It is not within our time that Belleville will emigrate to the Faubourg St. Honoré ; or that Monsieur Gambetta will sway the destinies of France, with Rochefort for his Minister of Public Instruction.

“Good, good,” said I. “Granted, Tonnerre.

But, my dear friend, we are still in the presence of at least three régimes. Three equally short cuts to a political Elysium are sufficiently embarrassing."

"But how many have we disposed of—at a blow? *Que diable!*"

"That is quite true; but Madame Chose was saying to me this morning she liked your soldier as a soldier; but who was to tell what he was as a statesman? She is not satisfied. We watch the public course of events. Women notice with whom our hero takes his soup. They know something, very often, of our hero's wife. The behind-the-scenes of politics are not on palace back-stairs, nor in the ante-chambers of ministers, but in the boudoirs of ministers' wives. We have no great salons in our time; but the scattered women's gossip—if you could only collect it as the Indian does the attar of roses, with the leaf of a sword-lily—would give you a truer idea of the current of events than all the newspaper philosophers can convey to you."

"My dear Chose, I have once or twice warned you from a dangerous path. Roses and sword-lilies are the finery of gentlemen who inhabit the clouds—they are not wear for us, who have got to do with barricades and petroleum—the radical's material of war. Your bonhomme, about whom you have been giving the White Mice some delightful sentiments,



no doubt, was a swift phrase-maker. If, with his intelligence, he had been born dumb, he might, perhaps, have moved the world. Nothing is powerful, that leaks."

"But I am moved by the spectacle of my country's ingratitude."

"And I am not," Tonnerre boldly replied. "If you pretend to put a man in the way of making his fortune, and you end by placing him in a poorly-paid and precarious clerkship, he will not be very grateful to you, although you picked him roofless and supperless from the streets. Your *bonhomme* exalted himself too much, and was ungenerous to all his opponents. He rejoiced, and held the corks, when the vials of the national wrath were poured upon innocent heads. The kindred of his foe he proscribed; while he welcomed back the children of his friend to plot against that very institution of which he was President. He snapped the eagles from our standards, and was ready to set up the cotton umbrella and blue pocket-handkerchief of feu Monsieur Smith. You say we have still three régimes before us; but who handed swords and cocked-hats, and got millions voted out of poor France's coffers to one, and that the least reputable, of these? Answer me, Chose, if you can—and then we will have our dominoes."

"You cut questions like a sabreur."

“And you peel them, and peel them, till all the fruit lies in parings at your feet.”

It was useless to argue with Tonnerre that day, so I played dominoes with him. And I won my game.

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## XII.

## THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN TONNERRE.

THE hopes and fears of the reign of the Marshal were too much for my honest friend, Tonnerre. He drew apart from me somewhat. He put away his dominoes. He forsook our humble and quiet place of entertainment where we had so often put the affairs of Europe straight, and agreed upon the bases of a perfect constitution for our dear France, to the military café on the Boulevard des Italiens.

"Captain Tonnerre has gone into respectable society, Monsieur Chose," was my wife's invariable remark, when I lamented my old friend's estrangement.

"Madame," was my reply, "there is no society more respectable than that of an honourable man who, by his own labour, has earned enough to support himself in his old age in the station to which he was born."

Madame Chose would smile sarcastically, and beg that I would not practise my oratorical gifts on her. "The White Rats——"

“Pardon,” I would say, with a bow—for nothing confounded her more thoroughly than studied politeness when she was in a passion—“Pardon, Madame; the White Mice.”

“The White Guinea-pigs, if that will please you!”

“Nay, it is not to please me that Madame uses the great power of retort with which Nature has endowed her.”

“May I be permitted to descend from the heights on which Monsieur André Chose dwells, to so prosaic a question as—socks? and venture to remind him that his are so full of holes that he must buy some more?—for I can mend them no longer.”

This was the way of Madame Chose. When I told her that I had reason to believe a *coup d'état* was not far off, and that we should see Tonnerre in it, she told me to go to the butcher's and order a tender *filet*. I had early scent of the fall of Jules Simon; and she replied (we were at table when I made the remark) that it would be better for my family if I used my keen olfactory sense at market; for the fish I had sent home had been refused by Bianca, our cat. One night, when all Paris was excited with the anticipation of a rising of the proletariat, I returned home to defend my hearth in case of attack.

“At any moment Belleville may descend upon us!” I cried. “Where is my gun?”

"It is in the lumber-closet," Madame replied, giving the last twist to a curl-paper. "Get into your night-cap as soon as possible, and hold your tongue. The universe will take good care of itself till the morning."

"Madame, I wish you good-night," was my reply. "I shall sleep with my weapon beside me."

"Good-night. You haven't forgotten the sardines, I hope?"

I had been commanded to bring home a box, for the morrow's breakfast.

"Sardines! when we are on the edge of a volcano!"

"Yes," was the reply, "sardines, and an omelette *aux rognons*. That will be your breakfast to-morrow. Do you think we could fry the omelette in your volcano?"

"Madame, you are exasperating."

"Monsieur is mad."

I was a miserable man. I saw Tonnerre now and then, and he came to dine with us at long intervals. But we avoided the subjects on which, in the old days, we had been accustomed to speak freely. He had secrets now—political secrets—which I was not to share. He remarked that we were in opposite camps. I begged for an explanation, but he avoided it. He said that it was evident; and Madame Chose supported him. I

could not believe that it was the same old soldier who had stood by me by the banks of the Seine, and had so often had recourse to my box of gentles. One day, when we expected him to dinner, I bought a fine *friture* of our Seine gudgeon, thinking I should catch him by his tender side, and, at the same time, smooth the tongue of Madame Chose. It was a dismal failure. Tonnerre passed the *friture*. His doctor had forbidden it. Madame Chose ate heartily of it, and had an indigestion. When Madame's dinner had not agreed with her, the reader's humble servant had a very bad time.

There was no help for it. Tonnerre and I had ceased to be intimate friends. Madame Chose said that I ought to find comfort in the remembrance of the days when that gallant officer honoured me with his company, and was gracious enough to fish with me. "Had you kept to the only thing you can do, Monsieur Chose," she would say, "and not drawn the Captain to your White Mouse-trap, and filled his noble head with your rubbish about the destinies of the multitude and the majesty of the bourgeoisie, he would have played dominoes with you to the end of your days, and you might have been buried together like Abelard and Heloise—I shouldn't have opposed the arrangement."

"As it is, Madame," I replied, stung to the quick, "you may possibly elect to occupy the place at Père la Chaise I have forfeited."

“It may be, Monsieur Chose,” was the impertinent reply.

I knew it in my heart, Captain Tonnerre had become a Bonapartist. I suspected him of having paid a visit to Chislehurst. He had a portrait of the Prince Imperial in his pocket-book. It fell out on the day when he searched it for the fish-hooks, which he offered to me, saying his angling days were over. I met him coming out of the Bonapartist church with violets in his button-hole. But we never exchanged a word on the subject. To him I had become a pekin. I was one of those objects of his scorn—an Orleanist. He loved me no longer: he tolerated me because we had been intimate as sportsmen. He continued to admit that our *pot-au-feu* was the best to be had in Paris; and he vowed that Madame Chose gave him all his favourite dishes.

But soon the crisis came. The high hopes of my poor friend were dashed to the ground. The dreams of the military party had a rude awakening. The *coup d'état* missed fire. The Marshal, after a tedious demoralising struggle, bade adieu to his friends—and went home to his dogs and guns, and his midday cabbage-soup with his cottagers. There was consternation in the ranks of the military Bonapartists. It was then I sought out Tonnerre in his old quarters by the Invalides. He was at home, and in bed; but would see no-

body. His concierge took my name to him; but he sent down a message that he thanked Monsieur Chose for his visit, but could not receive him.

I turned in deep sorrow from his door; to return to it only a month later, when I and a host of grey moustachios received at his threshold all that remained of him. I followed him to his grave, past the café where we had played dominoes so often; within sight of the river-bank where we had cast in our lines together, and before the rendezvous on the Boulevard des Italiens where he had spent his latter days.

As we entered the cemetery-gates (I was leaning on the arm of Monsieur Patin), a thin old man hobbled towards me, and raised his greasy hat. It was Father Asticot.

“He would have been alive now, Monsieur,” said Asticot, “had he stuck to his fishing.”

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## THE MONTREUX GOAT-HERD.

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It was *en plein vendange* that the news of the death of Vincent Dubochet—the friend of M. Thiers—reached us. Good Monsieur Monney's *pensionnaires* had been invited to his vineyards, and were standing up to their chins in the yellow vines, eating prodigious bunches of grapes, under a hot October sun, when the lively Parisian of our party held up the *Journal de Genève* (the *Times* of our *pension*), and said—

“I have the honour to affirm that Monsieur Dubochet is dead; and that he is to be buried at Père-la-Chaise.”

In reply to several “Ah! bahs!” and “Impossible!” the polite and pleasant old Frenchman added, “It is as I have the honour of informing you. He is *archi-millionnaire*. He has left the trifle of forty millions. Why was I *bête* enough not to invest in his gas combination? But it is Monsieur Gambetta who will be pleased. He

leaves him a million ; a million, ladies and gentlemen."

The news spread apace throughout Vernex-Montreux ; along the banks of the lake to Clarens on the one hand, and to Villeneuve on the other. Vincent Dubochet, the great man of Vaud, was dead !

Being dead—"dead as a door-nail"—it was quite natural that the good people of his native village should fall upon his memory, ventilate all his faults, sum up his mean actions, speculate on the manner in which he would "cut up," and consider the effect his demise might have over the neighbourhood of that pink chateau with the Italian tower which this king of gasmen had raised on the heights where Rousseau had wandered and maundered, and where Julie's bower had stood.

The Vaudois are a prosaic, hard-working, simple people, whose vines mean to them so many litres of poor white wine, at so many centimes the litre ; and who would not let the sun shine gratis on the stranger if they could help it. To them Père Dubochet, who had gone forth and won an immense fortune out of the astute Parisians, was the ideal man ; and they were very proud indeed of their *pays* when he came back to the Crêtes (his chateau) bringing with him the illustrious Thiers, or the patriot Gambetta. His brightest achievement was the meeting of the two great men,

and their reconciliation under his roof. Of this *rapprochement*, by the way, Adolphe Thiers said, with a shrug of his shoulders: "*Puisqu'il faut bien l'avaler, tôt ou tard, il faut commencer par le nettoyer!*"

Our dapper Parisian, whose wife was constantly chiding him for his *gamineries*, thinking that even a Parisian should have serious moments at sixty-three—found in M. Dubochet's death a delightful field for gossip. Within twenty-four hours he had collected all the items of information and of misinformation that arose in the cafés by the lake, at Schmidt's the apothecary, at Benda's, at the pastrycook's where he was accustomed to buy bonbons for the marquise, at the florist's where he purchased his bouquets for madame, and at the barber's where he was shaved.

About a man who has left his native village with empty pockets, and has amassed forty millions of francs abroad, his fellow-villagers have plenty to say. It speaks well for Père Dubochet that when a millionaire he returned to his native hills, set up his castle there, sought out his relatives (a rich man's relations are never far off), and set them up in the world—one as carriage-builder at Vevey, another in business at Vernex, and settled—a plain man to the end—in the midst of the folk who had known him as a poor peasant boy. This simplicity is Swiss—distinctly and exclusively Swiss.

“Here is Père Dubochet, in a few words,” said the Count at the table d’hôte, for the benefit of the general company. “To begin with, there is an old man still living here in Montreux, who tended goats with Vincent Dubochet, along these mountains. As boys they were goat-herds together. When Dubochet became too big for the business of goat-herd he went, or was sent, to a commercial house at Lausanne. From Lausanne, a *gamin sans le sou*, he made his way to Paris, and got employment there as a clerk. He had a shrewd Vaudois head upon his shoulders. He worked and saved, and looked out for exceptionally good investments for the few hundreds of francs of which he was master. He was very intelligent—ah! ladies and gentlemen, of that there is no doubt. *Jugez*. He invested his first savings in the Parisian *Gondoles*—an old affair which I can hardly remember. It threatened to turn out badly; but, without giving up his clerkship, he took it in hand, and managed so adroitly, that even when the company was broken up, he had multiplied his original investment by ten. For the rest, he went steadily forward in this way. Frugal, money-making his pleasure, a sharp and true observer of men, capable of double the work a Parisian ever thinks of doing—in short, a Swiss among Swiss. You can count humble copies of the Père Dubochet by the score, flourishing in Paris at this moment. They come

to us as clerks or as waiters. The clerks become partners ; the waiters end by being masters of our best restaurants. Père Dubochet threw himself into *haute finance*. He was not a gaillard to be content even with the *Café Anglais*. He whipped the Gas supply into the one great company of which you have all heard, and had a cupboard full of the most precious shares quoted on the Bourse. He created other prodigious concerns, and he clung to them like a mussel to the rock ; so that they all flourished ; and the Père Dubochet's name became synonymous with success. What Dubochet touched was sound and good. If all the Republicans were of the *trempe* of this Vaudois goat-herd—I could better understand a Republic.

“ He was a Republican then ? ” an English lady asked, with the hesitating air of one inquiring whether a man was a convict.

“ To the tips of his fingers,” said the Count. “ He subscribed a solid sum to the Republican electoral fund. Besides, did he not take Gambetta to his bosom ; and has he not made this monsieur a millionaire ? He was not so liberal here—in fact, he was not liberal at all. It required almost a surgical operation to get a few hundred francs out of him for the hospital of his native place. But,” here the Count chuckled, “ but the Commune will have its revenge now : it will help itself.”

The busy old Count had done his work com-

pletely. Père Dubochet had a large property in Montreux and Clarens—including the famous Villas Dubochet (Bois de Boulogne chalets grouped along the banks of Lake Lemman); and on all this—the property passing to nephews—the Commune would take fifteen per cent.

“*On n'est pas Republicain pour rien,*” said the gay Count. “Yes, fifteen per cent. to the Commune—but, one moment: this is not all. The Federal tax will be ten per cent.: twenty-five per cent. in all, to be deducted from the nephews’ inheritances. *Un quart!*” And the old gentleman raised his finger to fix the attention of the table.

Then he described a conversation he had had, in the vineyard, with a Swiss landowner, who was labouring just as hard as his farm-servants. Père Dubochet’s nephews might find themselves in a very hard position. Suppose one had the Villas Dubochet for his share. They were not good speculations, and he might have to sell them at a ruinous loss, in order to satisfy the Federal and Communal tax-gatherers.

“Aye, aye,” the Count said, by way of dismissing the Montreux goat-herd, “we have an old proverb, ‘*Point d'argent, point de Suisse.*’ We might add *point d'impôts, point de République. Sapristi!* twenty-five per cent of one’s inheritance for the honour of being under a president whose name one doesn’t know.”

I had just told the Count that I had asked the principal tailor of Montreux who was the President at Berne ; and that he, after scratching his head and thinking for a minute, had said—" *Monsieur, pour le moment je ne saurai vous le dire.*"

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GOODMAN MISERY.

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PETER and Paul met in a village on a certain day, when the rain was falling in torrents. They were wet to the skin. They were both in quest of a lodging for the night, but could find none. A rich man—one Richard—had turned them from his gates, bidding them remember that his house was not a public wine-shop, when a poor woman, who was washing linen in a brook, took pity on them and led them to her neighbour, the Goodman Misery. How much more considerate was the poor washerwoman than Richard with his closed gates; for, having bethought herself on the way that old Misery would probably have naught wherewith to break the fast and slake the thirst of his guests, she provided herself with some cooked fish, a big loaf, and a pitcher of Susa wine. Peter and Paul ate with a will. The hungry man tastes the sweetest viands. But sad was the case when the meal was at an end. Goodman Misery was so poor he had no bed to offer them, save the straw upon which he usually rested



his own aching limbs. The two travellers were, however, too considerate to accept it. They elected to sit up, and, by way of passing the time, suggested that Misery should tell his story to them. The Goodman consented, for it was a short and not a very eventful one. The most he had to tell was that a thief had stripped his pear-tree, the fruit of which was nearly all he had to depend upon for his wretched living. He would have gladly shared the fruit with them, had he not suffered this cruel robbery.

Touched by his distress, Peter and Paul told Goodman Misery that they would pray to Heaven for him. And one of them considerably added, if he, Goodman Misery, had any particular desire would he mention it?

The Goodman desired no more from the Lord than that any man who might climb his pear-tree should be fixed in it, and immovable, until he Goodman Misery, willed that he should descend from it.

On the very day which saw the retreating figures of Peter and Paul, while Misery was gone to fetch a pitcher of water, the same thief who had stolen his finest pears returned to the tree. Goodman Misery, having set down his pitcher, perceived the rascal immovable amid the branches.

“Rascal, I have got you, have I?” Misery shouted; and then, aside and in a low voice to himself: “Heaven! Who, then, were my guests

last night? This time you will need to be in no hurry to pick my pears; but let me tell you that you will pay a heavy price for them in the torments you will have to endure at my hands. To begin with, all the town shall see you in your present plight. Then I will light a roaring fire under my tree, and smoke and dry you like a Mayence ham."

Goodman Misery having departed in quest of firewood to smoke and dry the thief like a Mayence ham, the culprit cried lustily until he attracted two of the Goodman's neighbours. Yielding to the prayers of the thief, these two honest folk climbed the tree to rescue their fellow-creature, whereupon they discovered that they too were fixed to the branches. The three had been left in company just seventeen hours and a half when Goodman Misery returned with a bag of bread and a goodly faggot upon his head. He was terrified to find three men settled in his pear-tree.

"Come, come," he cried; "the fair will be a good one with so many customers. And pray what did you two new-comers want here? Couldn't you ask me for a few pears, and not come in my absence to steal them?"

"We are no thieves," they replied. "We are charitable neighbours, who came to help a man whose lamentations smote us to the heart. When

we want pears, we buy them in the market; there are plenty without yours."

"If what you say be true," said Misery, "you want nothing in my tree, and may come down as soon as you please; the punishment is for thieves only." Whereupon the two neighbours found themselves free, and quickly regained the ground; but the thief continued fixed to the branches in a pitiable condition after his long imprisonment; and the neighbours stood astonished at the power of the Goodman. They begged hard that Misery would take pity even on the thief, who had endured torture for many hours. The rascal prayed hard also, crying, "I'll pay any sum, but, *in the name of God*, let me come down. I am enduring tortures!"

At this word Misery permitted himself to be mollified. He told the thief, in releasing him, that he would forget his crime and forgive it. To show that he had a generous heart, and that self had never dictated any of the actions of his life, he would make him a present of the fruit he had stolen. He would be released from bondage in the tree, on the condition that he would take an oath never to climb it again, and that he would never come within one hundred feet of it while the pears were ripe.

"May a hundred devils seize me," said the thief, "if I ever come within a league of it again while I live!"

“That is enough,” said the Goodman. “Come down, neighbour, you are free ; but never return, if you please.”

The thief was so stiff and swollen in his limbs, that poor old Misery had to help him down with a ladder ; for nothing would persuade the neighbours to approach the tree a second time. The adventure made a great noise in the neighbourhood, and thenceforth Misery’s pears were respected scrupulously.

But Goodman Misery was old, and his strength was waning daily. He was content with the fruit of his pear-tree, but it was meagre fare that contented him. One day a knock was made at his door. He threw the door open and beheld a visitor whom he had long expected, but whom he did not imagine to be quite so near his poor hearth. It was Death, who, on his rounds, had stepped aside to tell him that his hour was near.

“Be welcome,” said the Goodman, without flinching a muscle, and looking steadfastly at him as one who did not fear him. Misery had naught on his conscience, though he had lived with very little on his back. Death was surprised to find himself so well received.

“What !” cried Death. “Thou hast no fear of me ! No fear of Death ! at whose look the strongest tremble, from the shepherd to the king ?”

“No, I have no dread of your presence,” Misery

said. "What pleasure have I in this life? If anything in this world could give me a regret, it would be that of parting from my pear-tree, which has fed me through so many years. But you must be settled with, and you brook no delays nor subterfuges when you beckon. All I will ask and beg you to grant me before I die, is, that I may eat one more of my pears in your presence. Afterwards I shall be ready."

"Thy wish is too modest a wish to be refused," said Death.

Misery crept forth into his yard, Death following closely on his heels. The Goodman shuffled many times round his beloved tree, seeking the finest pear. At length having selected a magnificent one, "There," he said, "I choose that one: I pray you lend me your scythe to cut it down."

"This instrument is never lent," quoth Death. "No good soldier permits himself to be disarmed. But it seems to me it would be better to pluck your pear with the hand. It would be bruised by a fall. Climb into the tree."

"A good idea," said Misery. "If I had the strength, I would climb; but don't you see I can hardly stand?"

"Well," Death answered, "I will afford this service. I will climb the tree myself."

Death climbed the pear-tree, and plucked the fruit which Misery coveted so ardently; but was

astonished when he found it impossible to regain the ground.

“Goodman Misery,” said Death, “tell me what kind of a tree is this?”

“Cannot you see that it is a pear-tree?”

“Yes, yes; but how is it that I can move neither hand nor foot upon it?”

“I’ faith that’s your business,” Goodman Misery answered.

“What, Goodman! You dare to play a trick upon me, at whose nod all the world trembles? Do you know the risks you are running?”

“I am very sorry,” was Misery’s cool answer. “But what have you risked yourself in coming to disturb the peace of an unfortunate who never did you harm in his life. What fantastic notion led you to me? You have the time to reflect, however; and since I have you now under my thumb, I will do a little good to the poor world, that you have held in bondage for so many centuries. No! Without the help of a miracle, you will not get out of that tree, until I please to permit you.”

Death, who had never found himself in such a plight, saw that he had to deal with some supernatural power.

“Goodman Misery,” he pleaded, “I deserve this for having been too amiable towards you. But, don’t abuse the power which the All Powerful has given you, for an instant, over me. Make no

further opposition, I pray you, to the decrees of Heaven. Consent that I shall descend the tree at once, or I will blast it unto death."

"Blast it," Misery answered, "and I protest to you, by all that is most sacred in the world, dead as my tree may be, it will hold you until you get free from it by God's will."

"I perceive," Death went on, "that I entered an unfortunate house for myself to-day. But come, come, Goodman Misery. I have business in the four quarters of the world, and it must be all ended before sundown. Do you wish to arrest the course of nature? If I were to make my way out of this predicament, you might feel it sharply."

"Nay," said Misery, "I fear nothing. Every man who is above the fear of Death is beyond any threats. Your menaces have no effect on me. I am always ready to start for the next world when the Lord shall summon me."

"Very fine sentiments, Goodman Misery! Thou mayest boast, Goodman, of being the first in this life who has gotten the better of Death. Heaven commands me that with thy consent I leave thee, to return to thee only on the last day of judgment, when I shall have completed my great work, and man shall be no more. You shall see the end, I promise you; so now, without hesitation, allow me to come down, or let me fly away. A queen is waiting for me, five hundred leagues off."

“Ought I to believe you? Or is it only to betray me that you speak thus to me?”

“No, never shalt thou see me again until all nature is desolation. The last stroke of my scythe shall fall upon thee. The edicts of Death are irrevocable. Dost thou hear me, Goodman?”

“Yea, I hear; and I believe in thy words. Come down when it shall please thee.”

At this Death swept through the air, and disappeared from the sight of Misery. The Goodman has never heard of Death since, although he has often been told of his presence in his neighbourhood, almost next door; so that Misery has lived to a wonderful age, and still dwells in rags near his pear-tree. And, according to the solemn promise of Death, Misery lives till the world shall be no more.

Upon hawkers' shoulders for centuries past has this legend of the words of Scripture, that poverty shall never cease from out the land, been borne through the villages of France. A learned Frenchman \* surmises that the Goodman was a French child stolen away into Italy, there re-dressed, and thence escaped home into France. Goodman Misery, in any case, has had his chief travels in France. Millions of copies, describing his interviews with Peter and Paul, the thief, and Death, have been sold by hawkers among the road-side cabins of France.

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\* Nisard.



## SUPPING MEN OF ROGER DE BEAUVOIR'S TIME.

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WE must turn back the pages of modern French history more than fifty years to get at the goodly company that, when Dumas and Lamartine, de Vigny and Hugo were young, held literary sway in Paris, and mocked the laughing hours in the Palais Royal. Then, the Frères Provençaux and Véry sufficed in grandeur and in art for the epicures and gilded youth of France. The fashionable men and writers who flourished in the early days of the Citizen King, and were the familiars of his scholarly sons, contrast advantageously with the sporting spendthrifts, and rich painters of manners as they rise, who now crowd the Bois in the season, and patronize the Provençal Brothers only when they are bent upon a carouse with actresses and dancers. Contrast the late Roger de Beauvoir with the late Duc de Caderousse, and the points in which the dissipation of Louis Philippe's day differs from that

of Napoleon the Third start to the front. The governing spirits of society under the monarchy of July were men of good family, but not rich men. Nor does it appear that they were possessed with that sordid avarice which may whet the edge of mediocre men, but only degrades genius. They were gay, laughing men—extravagant at times, with overmuch faith in the witcheries of Aï; but their dissipation was intellectual, and they rallied one another with polished epigram. As the Indian gathers the rose attar from the surface of the stream with the blade of the sword-lily, so this youth skimmed that which was sweet in life with the delicate weapons of the true artist. They were all poor men, or nearly all, who cultivated the grape on the slopes of Parnassus in the romantic generation of 1830. Roger de Beauvoir, according to Alexandre Dumas, alone had the great misfortune of being rich—three times rich. The leader of the band, Châteaubriand, was poor. Antony Deschamps, whose verse was on all lips, hardly had enough to put between his own. His brother Emile had a little clerkship in the Ministry of Finance. M. de Genoude paid the printer's bills when Lamartine issued his *Méditations Poétiques*. Beranger was born poor and died poor. Alfred de Musset had no silver spoon in his mouth; and George Sand was impatient to touch a few hundred francs for her "Indiana." M. Dumas admits that

Scribe started with £250 per annum, and died worth three million francs ; but then he will not allow that the dramatist was of the goodly company of men who wreathed the hours with song and beaded the cup with wit, and sipped all they could get that was sweet in life under the charter of July. Roger de Beauvoir first appeared before the public (with his "Ecolier de Cluny") in 1832. Three days after the publication of this romance it was on its way to the stage. M. Duman admits no "Ecolier de Cluny" no "Cour de Nesle." Roger was accepted among the joyous, lettered spirits ! and he brought with him that *esprit gaulois* which is hardly describable in English, and which, it has been said, Nature cast with both hands into his cradle. He was emphatically the best of all good company. He enchanted the brilliant and indefatigable Dumas with his inexhaustible spirits and his unfathomable store of fancies. Dumas says he was "adorable at the dinner-table." Roger was a man of strong build, of masculine mind, of the sunniest temperament. He was well read ; he had the instincts of an ancient race. The Jesuits who had brought him up, had given a solid background to his sparkling surface. The joyous company among whom his best days were passed pelted one another with compliments neatly turned, as well as epigram. Méry, perhaps the wittiest of the society, would slip some verses under the napkin of each guest.

At a dinner given by Antenor Joby, Roger found a poem by Méry with his bread. Four lines of it describe the young noble :

Artiste, chevalier, poète,  
Il a parcouru l'univers,  
Tenant à sa main toujours prête  
Le pinceau, l'épée, ou les vers.

Roger could reply alertly. Even Méry never brought him to a dead halt. The playfulness of the confraternity was always on hand, and verse tripped from pen and pencil at any moment. Roger called on Alexandre Dumas. Dumas was out. Roger asked for pen and paper to leave a word, and by some accident was shown into the kitchen. The Cook's account-book was lying upon the table, and he enriched it with this compliment :

Sur ce carnet Dumas écrit  
Jour par jour tout ce qu'il dépense,  
Il n'y pourrait mettre, je pense,  
Tout ce qu'il dépense d'esprit.

Dumas presents this as the style in which "Byronian comedy" was played five-and-thirty years ago. In the midst of fêtes, of gay dinners and gayer suppers, the spendthrift Roger made pauses enough to write about eighty volumes. Roger's romance "Chevalier de Saint Georges"—which he presented to his countrymen also in the form of a drama—will remain his brightest and best-known work. Romances, dramas, poems, songs, memoirs,

issued from his lively brain, it would seem, as easily as the retort over the wine-cup. In the iron body there was a spirit of fire that played, during forty years, the wildest pranks. Roger de Beauvoir was one of those strong, joyous, solid men who appear to defy disease, and with whom it is impossible to associate the sick chamber. But a fall, in November 1861, while reaching a book from an upper shelf in his apartment, Rue Richer, produced an internal rupture, and suddenly clouded all. The laughing philosopher was brought to his arm-chair; not to be wholly beaten at once, however. He must joke with the doctor who came to operate upon him. He examined the surgical instrument, and decided that he would sooner die than submit to its use upon his poor body. Doctor Favrot agreed with him. "That being decided," quoth Roger, "let us have a glass of champagne." Two bottles were drunk by the doctor and his patient, whereupon the man of art rose and said, "Let us embrace, my dear invalid, for it is probable we shall never meet again in this world." The doctor added that all would probably be over within twelve hours. "In any case, come to-morrow," the patient called to the retreating physician. Doctor Favrot agreed to call, as a matter of curiosity. Roger settled himself in his arm-chair, waiting for death. But sweet sleep came; his dropsical limbs were suddenly relieved, and he felt cured. On the

morrow he answered the bell when the doctor rang. He invited the fourteen doctors who had attended him to dinner, and compared himself to the Republic putting fourteen armies in motion against death.

And he turned again to gaieties and work. But Death was upon him, and his fourteen armies could not get him again out of his arm-chair. He could not lie down. A second time he fell; and now he was prostrated. Three or four days of agony, and he died, in the odour of sanctity, attended by a father of the order that had watched over his childhood.

Alexandre Dumas has called Roger de Beauvoir the gayest child of France; and he flourished when wit and wisdom graced the epicurean board, and men were children, like Méry, and spoiled like de Musset. Summing up the career of his favourite, the great Alexandre is exquisitely vain: "Had he been poor he would have cultivated art seriously; he would have written verses like Méry's; he would have produced comedies like de Musset's; he would have been the author of romances—like mine." He suffered in his latter time, on his return from Spain about 1873, but it was too late. He learned too late, in sorrow, that which he might have taught in song. His "Doves and Adders" *Colombes et Couleuvres*, are echoes of his serious part, the product of sad days. He had sung of

love, of Maruja, his dark idol, the pearl of Toledo, but had not been wounded by the flame. He returned from Spain, bespattered with the blood of Diego Leon, having seen the hero put to rest in Madrid, and launched his anathema on the country of the Cid, that had "one glory less, and one stain more." The man of pleasure was sobered. The light serenader who could sing of love and sleep soundly afterwards, was at last torn by a consuming passion. He took a vast hotel, and made his mistress its queen. Later, he gave up his palace, and married. Dumas describes the event in a few words: "The man least adapted to conjugal life, married the woman least fitted to be a wife. Explain this. He, a charming man; she, an adorable creature." His mother died. His health was suddenly shattered as we have described. The gay companion is crushed into the invalid, and the broken spirit, after some herculean struggles to laugh down anguish and forget that he is no longer happy. Roger rallied for brief spaces, but melancholy completely overspread him at last; and he who had shone in epigram wrote in tears. This lament over the laughter, the *Perigueux* pies, the black truffle and the winking Ai of former days, I agree with M. Dumas, is profoundly sad, written in a man's fifty-third year, from his chimney-corner, and over his gruel. "Alas!" Dumas cries, "volumes might be written on the gloom of

the gayest man in France!" There is sadness, too, in Roger de Beauvoir's posthumous volume.

These stories of supping men are occasionally most painful. The history of Saint Cricq—the nuisance of the Théâtre Français and the Café Anglais—is an extraordinary one; but it is difficult to laugh at a madman, especially at the madman who is a scholar. Saint Cricq, who sugared his tea from the salt-cellar, was an accomplished linguist, and was "profoundly learned in Egyptian antiquities."

The Count de Courchamps was a supping man worth painting. Author of "*Souvenirs de la Marquise de Crequy*," the friend of Brillat-Savarin, an epicure of the first order, he was a gentleman of the old school, with a biting tongue. Roger de Beauvoir said he combined the natures of a monkey, an abbé, and a cat. He frequented the Café des Frères Provençaux, then reputed to have the finest cellar in Paris. Here he had his appointed table. Bread was specially baked for him daily. He carried his own sauces in his pocket. His choice of wine was of the daintiest—in Burgundies chiefly. When he supped, he began at 10 o'clock and finished at midnight; and he went on supping and meddling with the kitchen to the end, even among the good sisters of Poitiers, who pitied him and let him die among them.

A more welcome figure, as Roger presents him,



is Armand Malitourne—the perfect conversationalist, as beloved as a friend as sought after for an attractive guest, epicure or Benedictine, by no means of the habit of Étienne Béquet, who lost himself in Rabelaisian *bouts*. Malitourne appears to have possessed in a high degree all those social graces which have faded in these latter days. He was to be seen at his best at one of Bouffé's, or Dr. Veron's, suppers—"humorous as Stendhal, lively as Romieu, and paradoxical as Nestor Roqueplan." And where is he? This is the question Roger de Beauvoir asks, giving himself the most melancholy of answers: "I know, but I will not depress you by telling you." The end of Béquet is as melancholy, capped with a Rabelaisian epitaph by his friend Roger. Lassailly follows, shivering, starving, with a faded white satin cravat upon his breast, and the worn seams of his coat inked. He has not dined for two days when Roger asks him to sup. He prefers port to champagne. The good cheer drives him mad, and he declaims fantastic verses; and De Musset and the rest laugh at his long nose! He makes a few francs now and then by selling couplets to the confectioners. He is the butt of the lively company, including Balzac, with whom he sometimes works. The account which Roger gives of Lassailly—book-grubbing in the country for Balzac, and the escape of the dreamer into the fields—is the most perfect bit in

the book of contemporary sketches before me. His escape from Balzac's control to Paris is the end of his adventures. Here is the *finis* of another supping-man of the romantic school: "Lassailly vegetated a few years longer, gnawing crusts, as he said, from the table of the Muses. He was almost mad when he fell sick. He disappeared completely. We saw him no more; we, who had called ourselves his *breeches purveyors*. Had he any when he died in the hospital? I doubt it. He faded away without noise, and—forgotten." The hospital appears to have been behind every supper-table!

The portrait of Briffault is the most completely Rabelaisian figure in Roger de Beauvoir's gallery; from his draught at the Corraza, in the Palais Royal, out of an immense cheese-cover full of champagne, which made men Knights of the Cup, to his drivelling upon a bench at Charenton.

According to Briffault's biographer, who cuts the angles of his figures very sharp, he could write only in his shirt-sleeves, with his elbows upon a restaurant table, and with empty plates and glasses before him. He had no style, but pretended to have based himself on Sterne. He was angry all his life with Jules Janin, for no reason that his friends could discover. Roger gives a final glance at him! Champagne had become too weak for him.

"A livid brow, sunken cheeks, a cadaverous

head, he appeared as of old at the tables where he had left so many empty bottles. His glazed eye sought old guests—who avoided, or would not see him! Nocturnal Paris—that curious many-sided Paris—beheld in him now only a ragged phantom, the spectre of his former gaiety.” So ended another of Roger de Beauvoir’s Barons of the Fork! Poor Briffault has left behind him a few *mots* for the Boulevard dining-tables, and nothing more. We give one. A certain epicure observed to him, “There should be two to eat a chicken.” “Exactly,”—from Briffault—“one-self, and the chicken.”

Romieu, Bouffé (not the *gamin de Paris*, but the epicure who bore the proud name of Bouffé-Champagne), Carnavallo, Perpignan, Cabanon, and a host of lesser men appear at Roger’s supper-tables, with here and there a witty countess and “a delicious actress”—Mademoiselle Cico, for instance. The famous nights at Gosselin’s are ended. No Carnavallo now wears a sky-blue felt hat bound with a rose-wreath through Paris streets for the amusement of the *gamins*. He would be a bold man, indeed, who aired his braces *outside* his coat, along the Champs Elysées. The end of Perpignan, and of the book, has the grim comedy about it which we find in Dumas’ account of the author; and in Roger’s sharply-etched portraits of supping-men, whom he has traced chiefly to a mad-house.

By mistake, the body of Perpignan, forgotten with the rest, we suppose, by his ancient boon companions, was conveyed to Perpignan, to be returned to Paris, like any other misdirected parcel !

The life of the "gayest man in France," and his memoirs of his table-friends, give the moralist copious illustrations. "Feast won, fast won," might stand on Roger's title-page. The romantic voluptuaries spared neither Lassailly's rags nor his nose. A friend's death was an excellent opportunity for an epigram !

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## HIS EXCELLENCY M. ROUGON.

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It was in 1866. "The Sitting is opened," said the President, in a low, tired voice, to the hundred deputies who were sprinkled about the Chamber, on the day when the expenses of the baptism of the Prince Imperial were voted. Then presently, the pale, closely-buttoned President announced that he had received a letter from M. de Lamberthon, in which he excused his absence from the sitting. Whereat there was a ripple of saucy laughter; and an old man sidled to a young, fair dandy of the Empire, and said: "Has Lamberthon really found his wife?" M. Kahn lazily dozed, his vacant eyes fixed upon the green silk curtains which the Second Empire had drawn before the fresco of Louis Philippe swearing to maintain the Charter. Then he looked wearily around the Chamber, and perceived Madame Bouchard and the little d'Escorailles in a tribune, sitting close together; whereupon he made an indecent observa-

tion about them to his neighbour, M. Béjuin—adding, as he continued his survey of the scene: “All Rougon’s friends seem to have met here to-day; there’s Madame Correur and the Charbonnels.” M. la Roquette approached M. Kahn, who had just obtained permission to print his speech on the proposed municipal tax on carriages and horses in Paris, and bantered him, saying: “You, you are working for the masses?” Then they fell into a conversation about His Excellency M. Rougon, President of the Council of State, the political crisis, and the nuisance of having to wait while the report on the expenses of the Imperial Baptism was presented and voted. Young La Roquette observed pompously that the Emperor might count upon the devotion of his Corps Legislatif, and then burst into a fit of laughter. By way of passing the time, La Roquette asked his neighbour who Madame Correur was? Had she not once kept a low-class hotel where Rougon lodged when he was without a sou, and lent him money? Mr. Kahn replied severely that Madame Correur was a highly respectable lady. It was agreed, however, that the Charbonnels were a ridiculous country couple—the man wearing clothes which appeared to have been cut with a hatchet, and that if Rougon fell, their law-suit was not worth a penny.

The Countess Balbi, and her daughter the

superb Clorinde, entered the *Chambre* with much rustling of silk that drew the eyes of all the deputies towards them. Kahn went off to ask Clorinde if she had any news of Rougon. While he was away La Roquette said to M. Béjuin : " If Rougon falls out with the Tuileries, poor Kahn may whistle for his railway concession." The cause of Rougon's threatened disgrace was his conduct in the case of one Rodriguez—a distant relation of the Empress—who claimed from the Government two millions of francs as indemnity for the wrongful seizure and sale of a ship loaded with sugar and coffee, in 1808, during the Spanish war. He had pestered every successive Government of France in vain, until his illustrious relation had intervened for him. Rougon opposed the demand as one for which there was not the shadow of a legal foundation.

" But why does Rougon prevent the grant of the two millions to Rodriguez," asked La Roquette. " What can it matter to him ? "

" It is a question of conscience," M. Kahn gravely replied. La Roquette glanced at his two colleagues Kahn and Béjuin, and seeing that they were not disposed to laugh, remained serious. M. Kahn continued. Rougon was worried, since Marsy had been at the Interior : they hated each other. Rougon said that if it were not for his affection for the Emperor, he should have retired

long ago. In short, he was not on good terms with the Tuileries, and he felt the necessity of making a fresh start. When M. Béjuin remarked that Rougon was acting like an honest man, La Roquette replied with a smile of incredulity, "If he wants to retire, he has a good opportunity. But what will become of his friends? There's the Colonel, up there, who hoped to have his red riband about his neck the next fifteenth of August. Then pretty Madame Bouchard had sworn that her husband should be at the head of a division in the Interior before six months were over. Little d'Escorailles—Rougon's spoilt child—was to put the nomination under M. Bouchard's serviette, on the morning of Madame's *fête*. Hulloo! Where are little d'Escorailles and pretty Madame Bouchard?"

They had retired to the back of the tribune, behind an old bald gentleman, and were sitting very close together, and were very red.

M. de Combelot, deputy for the Landes, and a chamberlain, entered the Chamber. He was a fine man, with a white face, and a jet black beard, that secured him many successes among the ladies. M. Kahn asked him news about the crisis; and he reported, with great dignity, that the Emperor and M. Rougon had had a very amicable interview—but he could say no more. Then M. Kahn remembered that La Roquette ought to know some-



thing about the ministerial crisis, since his sister was a *dame du palais*. La Roquette could only say that his sister believed that Rougon's resignation would be accepted: but he had a good story. "It seems," he said, "that they sent a lady to intercede with Rougon. You don't know what Rougon did? He showed her the door—and bear in mind that she was delicious."

"Rougon is a chaste man," M. Béjuin solemnly observed. La Roquette laughed outright, and hinted that he knew to the contrary, and suggested the names of Madame Correur and Clorinde. Whereupon the three gentlemen drew together and told stories of the free life of the Countess Balbi and her daughter, with her dirty stockings, her shabby boots, and her impudent smile. But M. Kahn would not admit that M. Rougon had been indiscreet with Clorinde. She amused him; he called her Mademoiselle Machiavel—but that was all.

While this conversation was proceeding the Chamber began to fill. M. Rougon entered while La Roquette was in the midst of a scandalous anecdote about Clorinde; and took his seat on the Government bench between two councillors of State. He was in his green uniform, relieved with gold embroidery at the wrists and collar. His heavy iron-grey hair packed upon his square forehead, his eyes veiled by heavy lashes and half-

closed eye-lids, his big nose and fleshy lips, his long cheeks unwrinkled by his forty-six years, had a rough vulgarity, which was transfigured now and then by the flashes of the beauty of strength. He remained in his place, tranquil, his chin firmly set in his coat-collar, not appearing to see anybody, indifferent and weary.

"He has his every-day look," M. Béjuin whispered.

Rougon's entry made a great commotion among his followers in the public tribunes. The Charbonnells stretched out their necks; Madame Correur coughed to draw the great man's attention; pretty Madame Bouchard came forward, adjusting her bonnet the while; and Clorinde, seeing that Rougon did not notice her, exclaimed loud enough to be heard all over the Chamber, "He is sulking, the big booby!"

The deputies turned, and laughed; and Rougon made an almost imperceptible sign to the lady, at which she laughed aloud and clapped her hands.

The President now rang his bell loudly, the deputies settled into their seats, and a blonde gentleman from a front bench said, in a shrill voice, that he had the honour to present a report on the proposed Bill for opening a credit of four hundred thousand francs for the expenses of the ceremony and fêtes of the baptism of the Prince Imperial.

With one voice, the deputies demanded that the report should be read.

The reporter then, in a sentimental tone, read his report, in which he observed that the proposed Bill was one which made the ordinary forms of procedure appear too long, because they impeded the spontaneous *élan* of the *Corps législatif*. The birth of the prince was of European importance. The great French family were about to invite all their members to express their joy with the august parents. The cradle of the Prince Imperial was a security for the future ; for in perpetuating the dynasty which they had one and all hailed, it assured the prosperity of the country, its repose in settled order, and, therefore, the peace of Europe. Much more in this strain was received with various marks of delight by the deputies, and the public in the tribunes, especially by the questionable supporters and old acquaintances of M. Rougon. Madame Bouchard, overcome by her feelings, resigned herself to the arms of M. d'Escorailles. The deputies were charmed at the prospect of a perpetual enjoyment of their places, which was guaranteed to them by the power of the Emperor, who was the arbiter of Europe ; and greeted the conclusion of the report with unanimous "bravos" —in which the public could not be prevented from joining. The reporter was besieged by deputies who insisted on shaking his hand.

Then the President rang his bell ; the Bill was taken into immediate consideration ; and, in the course of a few feverish moments, voted without a dissentient voice. The crowd dispersed, and then the ordinary business of the sitting was resumed before empty benches ; provincial credit bills being voted, one after the other, by the rising and sitting of a few drowsy legislators—very much as money is voted in the House of Commons. At length the sitting died out ; and the pale, closely-buttoned President retired, with military honours, to his residence. The hangers-on of M. Rougon met in the Salle des Pas Pedros—and heard, with consternation, that the resignation of His Excellency the President of the Council of State was accepted.

Rougon, in his gorgeous private room of red and gold, at the Ministry of State, is arranging and tearing up papers before an immense rosewood desk. He is clearing the way for his successor, assisted by his friend and creature Delestang, who has come to help him “ wash the dirty linen ” of his five year’s presidency. A woman’s letter turns up, and Delestang, with a leer, hands it to Rougon, who laughs, and burns it. This Delestang is the son of a Berg wine merchant, who is always in scrapes with women, and who, since the Coup d’État has been able to put by a million or two under the patronage of Rougon, and to set up a model farm near Sainte-Menchould. While the ex-President

tied up, or burned his papers, he gave his friend some wise counsel.

"When women do not put a crown upon your head, they tie a rope round your neck. In these times, understand, you must take as much care of your heart as of your stomach." While the statesman was delivering these worldly observations, another of his creatures burst into the room, and, drawing an arm-chair opposite his patron, demanded to be informed on the crisis.

"Give in your resignation, mon brave," Rougon replied.

"All right," the sub-prefect Du Poizat responded, lighting a cigar, and expressing his unconcern by a low whistle. Du Poizat, like Rougon, had lodged at Madame Mélanie Correur's hotel, and had been turned to account at the *Coup d'état*, and rewarded with a sub-prefecture. Rougon used, but suspected him—as well he might; for this sub-prefect, while his patron was absorbed in his correspondence, approached the bronze urn in which the condemned papers were burned, and turned over the ashes, looking for any scraps the writing on which might still be legible. Rougon suddenly caught sight of Du Poizat, and threw a bundle of flaming papers under his nose. Du Poizat only laughed. Rougon had ordered his attendant to let nobody in; but the greedy follow-

ing of the great man, bounded one after the other through the antechamber.

Kahn was the next intruder. Rougon told him to sit quietly near Du Poizat, or he would show the door to both. Kahn submitted to this rough reception ; lighted his cigar, and took his seat near Du Poizat. He pretended that he had not heard of Rougon's resignation, protested that he could not under the circumstances trouble Rougon with the object of his visit ; and then troubled him with it for half-an-hour. M. Kahn wanted a railway concession, that would quadruple the value of some property he had near Bressuire. Rougon had supported him with energy ; but the Minister of the Interior, M. de Marsy, had opposed the project, because, in the first place, no pickings had been offered to him, and, in the second, it gave him an opportunity of being disagreeable to Rougon.

The discussion which ensued exasperated Rougon ; and he turned upon his two creatures. He advised them to lie *perdu* for the present ; and to use any influence they might have in getting the concession shelved, until he, Rougon, returned to power. Meantime, he begged them not to look like men who were following at his funeral. For himself, he was glad to get a little rest. He should like to throw up politics, and take to a country life, with vast tracts of land to cultivate, flocks and

herds to look after. He could reign with delight over such a domain. His father had been a tiller of the soil. When he himself was a poor advocate at Plassans, his delight was to put on a blouse and get into the country, where he killed eagles. Since the morning he felt a new man. The Minister jerked his broad shoulders as though he were casting off a burthen. As he went on with the arrangement of his papers, he returned again and again, with a smile, to his idea of a vast farm which he would govern absolutely. It was his ideal life. To have a whip and to be in authority: to be the strongest through his commanding intelligence. While he spoke his huge person expressed restless strength, and a fierce will flashed in his eye from under the heavy brow and lashes.

“The Emperor has behaved very badly,” said Du Poizat.

The remark swiftly changed the current of Rougon's thoughts. His face lost its colour, and the strong man became the heavy, fat man. He would not hear the Emperor blamed. His was a powerful intellect—a mind of incredible depth. When he spoke, with humility—Du Poizat and Kahn exchanging glances the while—of his devotion, and protested that he had always been proud to be a simple instrument in the hands of Napoleon III., Du Poizat became impatient and angry, and recalled all Rougon and he had done for the Empire between

1848 and 1851, when they had hardly bread to eat at Madame Correur's. They had risked their skins twenty times. Was it not Rougon who, on the morning of the 2nd of December, had taken possession of the Palais Bourbon, at the head of a regiment of the line? His head was at stake. And now, he was sacrificed to a Court intrigue.

Rougon protested, and contradicted. He had retired freely. But Du Poizat was not to be calmed; and went the length of calling the Court "pigs," an indecency which the ex-President met by a sharp rebuke, emphasized by bringing his formidable fist down upon his desk with startling force. When calm was restored, Rougon said:

"No doubt the Emperor is surrounded by bad advisers. I took the liberty of saying so to him, and he smiled. He even deigned to banter me, saying that my *entourage* was not better than his."

Rougon's creatures winced; but admitted that the retort was pointed. The great man then said he wished his friends to say he had retired under no compulsion; and that he had long meditated retreat to the ease of private life. He laughed at a parliamentary *régime*, calling it the hot-bed of mediocrity; and vowed that the Chamber had already too much liberty. M. Kahn was delighted with this confession, for it confirmed his impression that Rougon had only met his disgrace half-way,



and that the Rodriguez affair had given him a superb opportunity of falling like an honest man.

Then the parasites fell upon M. de Marsy. Du Poizat said that he had known de Marsy before the *Coup d'Etat*, and that he had sold his mistress's diamonds and spent the money in three months. Kahn asserted that there was not a rotten affair in the market in which de Marsy had not a hand. In a certain mining company he had had a *pot-de-vin* of fifteen hundred thousand francs; he had just given a house to little Florence of the Bouffes, for which he had paid six hundred thousand francs—his share of the jobbery that had been going on in Morocco railway shares. From his character they went to his person, and pulled to pieces the superb air of an elegant adventurer which the world admired. They even abused his pictures. Du Poizat wound up by saying he is a robber thrust into the skin of a vaudevillist.

At this point Rougon raised his eyes upon the two talkers, and warned them that, say what they might, de Marsy was a strong man, who could make a mouthful of them both, at any moment—especially as he, Rougon, no longer stood in his way. Du Poizat reminded his patron that he had certain letters, for which de Marsy would give a heavy price. Rougon had one in his hand, and as he lighted it said disdainfully, "You knock a man

down—you don't scratch him. Everybody has some of these stupid letters in other people's hands."

D'Escorailles burst in, past the affrighted attendant, with pretty Madame Bouchard on his arm, followed by M. Bouchard, Colonel Jobelin and his son. Rougon was not at the pains of hiding his anger. He called to the attendant Merle to close the doors, saying: "All Paris will be in the room directly." While he spoke the Charbonnels slipped past him.

They had seen the *Moniteur*, and had come to offer their sympathy—and to know how their respective interests would be affected by their patron's fall. All had something to ask; and Rougon did his utmost to satisfy or console them one by one. But disappointed beggars are insolent as well as ungrateful; and the parasites at once began to debate in whispers the probability of Rougon's return to power, measuring hereby their fidelity to his cause. Most of them were of Rougon's *pays*, where his mother was known as Madame Félicité. His ex-landlady entered by a private door, and implored him to tell her how the interests of all his protégés who wanted *bureaux de tabac* stood. She called her protector Eugene, and said naively that his friends must work to get him back again, for without him they would be nothing. Rougon whispered to her to lecture Gilquin, who, taken up

a few nights before in a state of drunkenness, had given his name as his friend.

Then the band dispersed, each whispering to Rougon the hope that he would not forget. Kahn closed the procession, saying in a loud voice: "You don't belong to yourself, but to your friends—and France!"

His papers arranged and packed, and his parasites discharged, M. Rougon was about to leave his room, when Merle appeared, to tell him that there was a lady on horseback who wished to speak to him. It was Mademoiselle Clorinde. Rougon replied that he was coming out; and as he left his ministerial sanctum, the candle with which he had been burning papers went out, and the expiring flame splintered the *bobèche* with a loud report.

Clorinde is a fascinating, clever, majestic, and profoundly immoral intrigante, of mysterious origin. Her mother is reported to have great power at Turin, owing to a liaison with an illustrious personage there; and, through the Italian legation, she and her daughter find their way into the highest official society. In this way Clorinde meets Rougon, the all-powerful, and determines to enslave him. Rougon is a chaste bachelor, a man of severe morals; and at first he avoids Clorinde and her mother when he meets them in society, and declines their invitations. But Clorinde is not easily beaten off. She is perpetually on horseback in the street

where Rougon lives ; she throws herself in his way, until he is fairly interested in the superb stranger. Even then he is cautious, and makes inquiries about mother and daughter—even at the Prefecture of police ! Here he finds them marked down as persons living at a great expense without having any known fortune, but as frequenting the best society. He decides to call upon them, although he has heard reports that Clorinde has had an amour with a coachman, and derived her actual means from the love of a banker. With all this Clorinde appears a wild, wayward child to the great man, who has always avoided women hitherto, and whose sluggish senses have left him free from any approach to a *grande passion*.

Rougon's fall gave Clorinde her opportunity ; and her visit of condolence paid to him as he was leaving his Ministry, was a master-stroke. Free from the cares of State, he became a frequenter of the Countess Balbi's Bohemian household, in which Clorinde is represented by the romancist as beautiful and dirty ; and although in the midst of the meanest disorder, superb and imperious as a heathen goddess. Her disordered bedroom is spread with unwashed garments ; her dresses lie in a heap, with a cat asleep upon them. Clorinde herself is in a gallery, which serves by turns the purposes of study, smoking-room, and drawing-room, and is the scene of the noisiest and most

unceremonious meetings. One day when Rougon appeared, Clorinde was sitting to an artist as Diana—dressed, or rather undressed for the part—while three Venetian gentlemen were smoking big cigars on the sofa, and La Roquette was waltzing with a chair to the sounds of a cracked piano played by the Italian Minister. Clorinde did the honours in her slight costume of gauze, with commanding dignity—issuing orders to her visitors *en souveraine*.

“Chevalier,” she said to the Italian Minister, “make me a cigarette. You will find the tobacco on the piano.”

Seeing that the modest Rougon was startled at the scene, she told him to wait a moment; and then she appeared—as Venus! and the Venetians, taking their cigars from their mouths, cried “Brava! brava!” Rougon, although disconcerted, was dazzled by Clorinde’s incomparable beauty. She went the length of imitating him, as he appeared speaking in the Chamber; and he accepted the liberty. He was bewitched. The sluggish blood had been moved at last; and Clorinde saw her victory.

In the midst of this scene the Countess Balbi communicates some important intelligence to the Italian Minister, which made him exclaim that the real legation was in the hotel of the Countess; but the news was good, and he consoled himself by playing a vulgar air that was popular at the

time. Then he took his hat and went away to his diplomatic duties. The rest of the company followed; and then Clorinde, still Diana in her dress, threw herself upon a sofa, took Rougon by both hands, and made him tell her the whole intimate story of his difference with the Emperor, and of his disgrace. Diana, of course, sent the story to Turin.

Rougon had no sooner divulged his secrets under the seductive influence of this Diana of the Champs Elysées than he repented; and vowed that his flesh should not be so weak again. He had intended to be the inquisitor, and that Clorinde should be his dupe. He would, however, have his revenge. She should become his mistress, and then he would leave her. He endeavoured to extract a few secrets from her, but she gave him nothing more than the poorest gossip; while he, still under the influence of the goddess in gauze, loosed "the jesses of his tongue," and gave her sarcastic portraits of his colleagues and rivals—dwelling particularly on De Marsy, of whom he said, "These bastards are always lucky. But his *esprit* spoils him. He has extraordinary intelligence, and can do anything. He was a colonel at twenty-eight; then he was at the head of some great industrial works; and then he took to agriculture, finance, commerce. He has an iron wrist, that is capable of the hardest thrusts and the

most delicate movements." While he spoke Clorinde's eyes fell upon his huge hands. "As for me, I have paws, haven't I? That's why I and De Marsy have never got on well together. He pinks the world gaily, without staining his white gloves. I give knock-down blows." Rougon in these few words gave his whole history.

"My grandfather sold vegetables. As for me, I vegetated until I was thirty-eight as an obscure advocate, in my native province. Yesterday I was unknown. I have not, like our friend Kahn, worn out my shoulders supporting every Government. I have not sprung, like Béjuin, from the Polytechnic School. I have neither the fine name of little Escorailles nor the figure of poor Cornbelot. I am not so well supported as La Roquette, who owes his seat as deputy to his sister, the widow of General de Llorentz, and now *dame du palais*. My father, unlike Delestang's, did not leave a fortune of five millions made out of wine. I was not born, like the Count de Marsy on the steps of a throne, and did not grow up near the petticoats of a learned woman, under the caresses of Talleyrand. No, I am a new man: I have but my fists. I was nothing, and now I have only to choose."

The scene closes upon a disaster. An old lover of the Countess Balbi calls. M. de Plonguern is an elegant old reprobate and unbeliever, who pretends to have *bonnes fortunes* in his old age, and

excels in well-turned blasphemies. He treads upon a chaplet given to Clorinde by the Pope, and which was lying upon the ground. Clorinde is *devote*, and cries like a child, while the old man, mocking religion the while, tries to mend it. But she is consoled with a box for the Palais Royal Theatre.

On the day of the baptism of the Prince Imperial, Monsieur and Madame Charbonnel are seated outside a little café on the Quai de Gèvres in the company of Théodore Gilquin, an old lodger in Madame Correux's hotel, and, hence the terribly compromising friend of Rougon. Gilquin was dressed in a soiled and frayed yellow linen suit, and wore a straw hat. He had met the Charbonnels in Rougon's kitchen, and had constituted himself their guide for the great show. He was preparing himself for the task, as he prepared himself for most tasks, by getting drunk. While he tumbled, he talked about the Tuileries as though he had spent the morning there. The Emperor was in high spirits. He had been told at the palace that the procession would cost four hundred thousand francs. The Imperial baby-linen was worth a hundred thousand francs. While Gilquin babbled in his cups, the bells of Notre Dame vibrated over the heads of the prodigious crowd, and the Charbonnels showed signs of impatience to find good places. But Gilquin was not to be moved; and



called for more absinthe and cigars. By the time the first carriages of the State dignitaries began to pass on their way to Notre Dame, he had become noisy ; and when Rougon passed in his brougham, he shouted after him at the top of his voice. Rougon turned away ; whereupon Gilquin called after him, " He doesn't know me, because he has gold lace upon his coat. For all that, old fellow, you have borrowed Theodore's boots more than once." Then, addressing the people round about him, he added : " This Rougon ! I made him ! " Madame Correur had joined the party ; and Gilquin called upon her to bear witness to the crowd that he was speaking only the truth. " She's a good witness," said he, " for she bought him his first pair of new boots in Paris." Gilquin's companions were disgusted and turned their backs upon him ; but the absinthe had loosed " the jesses of his tongue," and he related to the amused crowd the most intimate and sordid details of Rougon's beginning. How they had worked together as travellers in olive oil : how they had done all kinds of dirty work for the Empire. The Empire owed him a famous debt of gratitude ; but he had got nothing, while this Rougon was at the top of the tree.

When the ceremony was over, M. Rougon was driving Clorinde home in his carriage, when they were stopped by a crowd that stretched across the

road. A drunken man had insulted a passing regiment, and was being conveyed *au poste*. Rougon, looking out, saw that it was Gilquin, in the hands of two *sergents de ville*. He was boasting to them of his powerful friends as they dragged him along. He caught sight of Rougon, and talked louder, calling upon the police to ask the Emperor who Theodore Gilquin was. Rougon beckoned a detective, who was at hand, to his carriage-window, and gave him Gilquin's address. Whereupon the police stopped a cab, threw the drunkard into it, and conducted him to his home.

Rougon grew daily more deeply enamoured of Clorinde; but a veil must fall upon the incidents of the progress of his passion, and the lady's development of her designs. The lover becoming too pressing and adventurous, is punished with the lady's riding-whip, and cannot show his face for many days. But the pair are well matched. The lady uses her charms with economy; the gentleman desires to possess, and then, by way of revenge for the humiliations to which he has been subjected, to abandon his mistress. I repeat, a veil must be drawn before the coarse episodes of this *liaison*. It is in all respects degrading, and is made so, as part of the author's general design. The scenes between Rougon and Clorinde, both before and after his marriage (which takes place in the midst of them), cannot be laid under modest

eyes. They are meant to lower the Court of the Second Empire in the esteem of the world, by presenting the highest dignities of that *régime* not only as debauchees, but as reckless and dishonest public servants ; and the artist lays on the colour with a bold brush. He paints, not with pigments, but with slime ; and again and again his readers must be disgusted to see so skilful a hand employing so foul a medium.

Rougon, like the Emperor, is described as being better than his *entourage*. This is a stroke of high art ; for both Emperor and Vice-Emperor are put in many equivocal positions, and represented as persons of loose morals. Clorinde, having been thoroughly exposed as an adventuress of the most daring and immoral kind, appears at Compiègne, and as a friend of the Empress. In the course of her intrigue with Rougon, Clorinde has married—at the instigation of Rougon—a high functionary of the Empire—a trifling episode in her career which does not interrupt the ordinary current of her life. She uses her charms to advance this husband, as the easiest way of advancing herself. She had intended to marry Rougon, but the great man avoided the trap, and for this she never forgives him, and never ceases to practice the arts of a deadly enmity upon him. She schemes for and accomplishes his discomfiture ; she crosses his path again and again. Admiring

his immense strength of will and great influence over men, she admired herself more, because she had more than once proved stronger than the giant.

Rougon, having married a serious, middle-aged lady of good family, who kept his house in severe order, lived a quiet, retired life; dreaming of a return to the power which he passionately loved, and amusing himself with little receptions on Sundays and Thursdays, at which his flatterers and protégés discussed the politics of the day, and calculated the chances of his return to office. The Charbonnels, Madame Correur, D'Escorailles and the Bouchards, Clorinde and her husband, M. Béjuin, M. Kahn, Du Poizat—all the old troop of beggars who have known the ex-minister as a poor advocate at Plassans, flock to his salon, to calculate the advantages and risks of remaining faithful to the disgraced minister. A shabbier, meaner-spirited, and more utterly heartless following never compromised a public man. This portraiture is not merely a severe criticism on a *régime*, it reflects discredit on the nation to which the sitters belong. They are all Frenchmen; and some of them, who crave Imperial favours, are not even Bonapartists. They are worshippers of the rising sun, who toss off charges of infidelity with a jest; who cannot conceive men to be actuated by other than the lowest motives; and who put to-

gether the most ingenious and amusing reasons for being ungrateful.

Du Poizat, who has lost office with Rougon, protests that he has always been a republican. "They are afraid," he cries, meaning the Government directed by Rougon's rival, De Marsy, "that the press would divulge the truth. Our press, which is threatened with strangulation whenever it speaks, is a disgrace. One of my friends, who is publishing a romance, has been summoned to the ministry, to be informed by one of the chiefs that he must alter the colour of his hero's waistcoat, for it was displeasing to the minister. I am not inventing. Yes, I am a republican."

"You are fortunate. For myself—I don't know what I am."

Rougon, who was playing a game of patience, listened to his parasites, shrugging his shoulders now and then contemptuously.

"The parliamentary *régime* gave solid guarantees," said the Colonel, "Ah! if the princes could return!" Colonel Jobelin was an Orleanist when he could not see his way clear to promotion in the Legion of Honour under the Empire. He continued: "We were very happy under Louis Philippe. Do you think that, if we had a responsible ministry, our friend would not be at the head of affairs before six months were over? We should soon have one great orator the more."

M. Bouchard was, for the moment, a Legitimist. He sharply retorted upon the Colonel :

“Enough, enough ! Your Monarchy of July was a government of expedients. There is but one true principle : you know that very well.”

Then the two engaged in a very hot discussion, in which they roundly abused the Empire, and then each other. Delestang intervened at length, and gave a patronising support to the Empire, which he was serving. He wanted a more liberal, perhaps a more socialist empire ; he had ideas about the extinction of pauperism and co-operation—but he was a Bonapartist decidedly. M. Béjuin was also a Bonapartist—with certain reserves.

“Of course ! of course !” cried Du Poizat laughing, “Béjuin has just been re-elected, and Delestang remains in the Council of State, and d’Escorailles is still an auditor. You pretend to be horrified with me. But the thing is clear enough. I and Kahn are no longer paid to remain blind.”

Rougon told them that they were foolish to quarrel. “In France, directly there are five gentlemen in a salon, five Governments are face to face. Yet this does not prevent them from serving the actual Government, does it ? To my mind De Marsy has conducted the elections admirably. As for the press, it has already too much freedom. De Marsy was right in refusing Kahn permission to establish a newspaper. Why put a weapon

into the hands of your enemy? An empire that gives way to sentiment is an empire lost. France wants an iron hand."

Delestang was about to protest but; Clorinde, the wife whom Rougon had given him, silenced him by imperious gesture. She approved Rougon's view entirely.

"Yes! yes! I expected these 'necessary liberties,'" Rougon continued. "Just listen; if the Emperor were to consult me, he would never grant a single liberty, *never*. But what has this to do with me now. I am just a *bon bourgeois*. I pray God that the Emperor may not want me again."

M. la Roquette entered; and M. Rougon put his finger to his lips to warn the company to be discreet. La Roquette probably came from the Tuileries to act the spy. His sister, Madame de Llorentz, one of the Empress's ladies of honour, had just resumed an old *liaison* with M. de Marsy, who had been married only six months. But Rougon turned the tables on the emissary of Madame de Llorentz's lover; and, while he said nothing himself worth reporting, obtained a full account of the joy with which the Emperor and his Court had heard of the success of the elections. And then, at ten o'clock, with a yawn, Rougon told his company—it was his regular custom—to go home to bed. Clorinde made frequent calls on Rougon, and

Madame Rougon left them for hours together ; during which the ex-minister gave the lady excellent advice. Again and again he recommended her to be faithful to her husband. At last this counsel irritated her and she replied, " Well, if anything *did* happen, what would *you* lose by it ? " Rougon blushed. The retort had re-awakened old feelings, and so effectually rekindled his jealousy, that he set a watch on her movements. But he found no important scandal against her. She was merely eccentric, untidy, and at home had the habits of a gipsy. All her thoughts were given to political intrigues for the advancement of her husband, and she was to be seen in all directions, with a shabby portfolio under her arm, calling on influential persons of any coterie. She delighted to mystify Rougon, and at the same time to obtain his advice, and elicit his opinions, by dexterous flattery. She treated him as a great and wise man, and threw herself at his feet as his disciple,—but only to serve her own purposes. She believed that he must be called back to the head of affairs, and, believing this, and that he would be useful in her ambitious projects, she was alarmed when he announced that he thought of retiring to the Landes and carving a little empire of his own out of that dismal wilderness.

Her alarm was dissipated however, at one of his receptions, when he lifted a rose-coloured card



from his mantelpiece, and, showing it to his guests, said : " An invitation to Compiègne."

" He must go ! " was the chorus of his creatures, who said that he owed it to them to reinstate himself. Clorinde and her husband were also invited. The life at Compiègne is of the fastest splendour on the surface, and intrigue in every corridor. The conversations are strongly seasoned with improper stories. The august host and hostess are put boldly *en évidence*. De Marsy has a quarrel with a discarded mistress who holds compromising letters written by him. Scandalous anecdotes and indecent remarks on the ladies prevail at the Imperial dinner-table. The Emperor is described making his way through the gallery where dancing is going on, and glancing at the bare shoulders of the ladies. After the dispersion of the company for the night, Rougon wanders into the park, and sees a light at the Emperor's window. He smiled as he recalled an anecdote of the grave Emperor, in a blue apron and a paper cap, papering a room in the Trianon, to lodge a mistress. Perhaps he was now, in the solemn silence of the night, cutting out little pictures and pasting them, which he could do very neatly, in a book.

The next morning Rougon accused Clorinde of having with De Marsy behaved with marked impropriety at the dinner-table, and rated her soundly. In the afternoon he was invited to take tea with

the Empress, and the company were amused with the details of a judicial separation.

The political result of Rougon's visit was the request of the Emperor that he would remain in Paris. This request set all the great man's parasites to work to make political capital for him. Rougon's star was once more in the ascendant, and the spirits of his creatures rose with it. They circulated anecdotes and rumours to the disadvantage of De Marsy, and earwigged his employés to learn his movements. They even frequented cafés to talk against him and in favour of their patron. But the day of triumph was slow in dawning, and the parasites were becoming impatient; when Gilquin called on Rougon one day, and told him that there was a plot in progress to assassinate the Emperor. The conspirators lodged in his house, and in the room next to his, and he had heard all their plans, and seen their weapons through a crack in the door. Rougon shrugged his shoulders when Gilquin urged him to go with the story to the Emperor, but he could not refuse to believe something of the drunkard's story. It had the sound of truth.

"It's for to-morrow night," Gilquin whispered. Badinguet is to be cleared off as he is entering the opera. Carriages, aides-de-camps, all the lot are to be swept away."

On the following night the Orsini attempt

on the Emperor's life was made. Rougon, who had remained undecided as to the course he should adopt in regard to Gilquin's story, and had spent the day arguing and toying with Clorinde, was strolling along the quays when the catastrophe happened. Ten days afterwards he was in De Marsy's place at the Ministry of the Interior, with M. d'Escorailles for his secretary.

M. Rougon was replaced in power to strike terror into the hearts of men; and he hit hard. The Emperor had said to him, "No moderation, let them fear you"; and he was sending away a ship-load of Republicans once a week. The country trembled under the régime of terror which Rougon, laughing the while, directed from his green velvet sanctum. He enjoyed his power, grew fat and hearty with it. It was his ambition to make France feel each footfall when he strided across his room, and to know the weight of his plebeian fist. He revelled in the hatred with which men hissed his name between their teeth; but above all he enjoyed the adoration of the parasites who had known him from the beginning, and he loved to have them about him. When prefects applied in vain for admission, Madame Correur and the Charbonnells were shown at once into his presence. The minister's room was the daily meeting-place of the Bouchards, Kahns, Béjuins, and the rest of his creatures, who were now one and all hot

Bonapartists, and on the look-out for places and honours for themselves and friends, which Rougon tossed to them as he would toss a toy to a child. In a few days, d'Escorailles was knight, M. Kahn and Bouchard officers, and the Colonel commander of the Legion of Honour. Gilquin had been appointed a Commissaire Central. While gossip was going on in the minister's room, prefects remained waiting in his ante-chamber; and as the arrival of each was announced, Rougon uttered some brutal exclamation. Madame Bouchard came to crave a place for a new lover, and endeavoured by her blandishments to seduce the minister into compliance; but he resisted, and refused, and by the time he had got rid of the lady it was the breakfast hour. Leaving his ante-chamber full of prefects, he went to breakfast in the salon, where he found Clorinde waiting for him. Madame Rougon had just left to go to the South to pass a month, and M. Delestang was in Italy on an agricultural mission.

When the breakfast was over and the servants had brought the coffee and liqueurs, Rougon told them they might go, and he and Clorinde were alone. The lady lit a cigarette, and then divulged by degrees the object of her visit. She wished Rougon to understand the extent of the sacrifices she had made for him. For him she had yielded to M. de Marsy, the Chevalier Rusioni, Monsieur

Lebeau, Monsieur Salneuve, Monsieur Guyot-Laplanche. Rougon, instead of feeling gratitude, only remembered the determination with which his advances had been rejected. Emboldened to renew them, the lady rebuked his embrace, by planting her lighted cigarette firmly upon his forehead. It will be remembered that on a previous occasion she had horsewhipped him.

Then M. Rougon returned to his room, and at last received the prefects, to tell them the number of persons each was to arrest in his department, in order to strike terror into the population.

"Could His Excellency name me the persons I am to put under lock and key?" asked the simple prefect of the Somme.

"As for that, arrest whom you please. I can't trouble myself with details—I should be overwhelmed. Only return to-night, and make your arrests to-morrow. I would advise you to strike high. You must have advocates, tradesmen, chemists, who dabble in politics. Box me up these, it will have a good effect."

The prefect of the Somme was a little man, and Rougon had no faith in little men. The prefect had hesitated moreover. Rougon put a red mark against his name as he left the room.

A journalist entered after the prefect. Rougon reproached him vehemently with calling in doubt

the infallibility of the Government, and with attacking the upper classes, although he was in the pay of the ministry.

"I forgot, also," said Rougon, "your *feuilleton* is odious. A woman of education who is false to her husband, is a detestable argument against education. You ought not to permit it to be said that a woman of society can commit such an error."

The editor ventured to remark that the *feuilleton* was very popular, and that he himself thought it very interesting.

"You have read it?" cried Rougon. "Well, does the unfortunate woman feel the stings of remorse in the end?"

The editor, after some reflection: "Remorse! No, I think not."

Rougon, as he showed the editor to the door, said: "She must feel remorse. Request the author to fill her with remorse."

The red mark of Clorinde's cigarette was still upon the virtuous minister's brow.

Clorinde, Delestang (her husband), and his Excellency M. Rougon, Minister of the Interior, are on their way, by road, to St. Cloud; the two gentlemen to attend a Council of Ministers (Rougon has got Clorinde's husband appointed Minister of Agriculture), and Clorinde to have an interview with the Empress, as treasurer of a charity for helping poor work-girls. Rougon is in an ill-fitting

coat, and his unbrushed hat is covered with rain-marks. Clorinde, looking at him, thought he looked like some low horse-dealer she had seen. She was no longer his disciple. Through him she had planted her foot firmly in the palace, her husband was Minister, and Rougon's reign would not last always. When he asked her if she wanted anything, as he would presently have an opportunity of talking with the Emperor, she replied that now she could run her own errands.

While waiting round the council-table for the appearance of the Emperor, the ministers talked first of an embassy which had just arrived from the East, and then of a dancer at the opera who had had an accident. A door was thrown open, and the Emperor appeared. He rested on the back of his chair for a moment, and then said slowly :

“Is she better?”

“Much better,” said the Minister for Foreign Affairs, bowing low. “I had news of her this morning.”

The ministers on a sign from the Emperor, who looked ill, took their seats. There was a profound silence. The Sovereign sat with a vacant face, twisting the ends of his moustache. Presently he appeared to remember, and observed, by way of opening the business, “Gentlemen, the Session of the Corps Législatif is nearly over.”

After a few words about the budget, the Keeper of the Seals read the heads of a project for the creation of a new aristocracy, which he had drawn up on notes supplied by the Emperor. The new nobility was to be based on services to the State. Counts were to be created after five years' service as high dignitaries, or after having served the Crown as ministers, senators, marshals, admirals, or cardinals. Archbishops would become, in due time, barons. Rougon the plebeian, and the Minister of State, the representative of an old Norman family, exchanged glances of disdainful disapprobation, while the Keeper of the Seals continued his reading. The project created barons, generals, ambassadors, judges, councillors of state, even mayors of provincial capitals, after certain terms of service.

"Everybody will be baron," interrupted Rougon. His colleagues looked at him as though they held him to be a very under-bred man.

When the reading was over, the Emperor said, "What do you think of the project, gentlemen?" But as there was no reply, the august president addressed himself to M. Rougon. "What do *you* think of it, Monsieur Rougon?"

"Sire," the Minister of the Interior bluntly answered, "I don't think much of it. It is open to the gravest of dangers, ridicule. I am afraid all these barons would be laughed at.



I don't dwell on serious objections, on the sentiment of equality which it would shock——”

The Keeper of the Seals sharply interrupted the Minister of the Interior, and then an angry discussion ensued between them. The Emperor listened, rocking himself in his chair till the loud voices appeared to offend his dignity, when he calmed them with :

“Messieurs ! Messieurs !” And then he added : “Perhaps M. Rougon is right. The question is not ripe yet. It must be studied on other bases. We shall see later.”

Then some press questions came before the Council. His Majesty was urged to suppress the *Siècle*, which was for ever calumniating him and his Government. But His Majesty had a friendly feeling toward journalism ; he often wrote, *sub rosa*, long articles in reply to attacks ; and it was his dream to edit a paper of his own. But he could not refuse to permit a warning to be sent to the *Siècle* for its last attack.

It was hoped that this would close the meeting, but Rougon had an important matter in hand. He wanted to bring before the Council a book called *Les Veillées du bonhomme Jacques*. It was full of dangerous socialistic doctrines, the work of a demagogue. It was the more dangerous because it was seasoned with faint praises of the Empire. The *Colportage* Commission wanted to authorize its

dissemination through all the villages of France ; he was resolved to suppress it, but he submitted the question to the Council first.

The Emperor admitted that a copy had been sent to him, and then said that he should be glad to have the opinion of any ministers who had read it. Delestang, who had been ordered by his wife to oppose Rougon by way of giving himself an independent position, spoke against the Minister of the Interior, and opined that the *Veillées* contained excellent ideas and good advice. The Emperor smiled on M. Delestang while he read passages. At last Rougon, exasperated by the audacity of his creature Delestang, rose and said : “ Sire, this is a trifle, the official stamp shall be given to it, since your Majesty, in your wisdom, sees no danger in the book ; but I warn you that there would be the greatest danger in giving France half the liberties claimed by this *bonhomme* Jacques. You called me to power under terrible circumstances. You told me not to endeavour by inopportune moderation to reassure those who were trembling. I have made myself feared, according to your wish. Believe me, anarchy growls passionately in the lowest depths of society. I don’t wish to exaggerate this sore, but it is my duty to recall its existence to the mind of your Majesty, that you may guard against the generous instincts of your heart.” In a long and passionate harangue M. Rougon, watching the effect

of his words on his colleagues the while, then implored the Emperor to be firm, and to keep a hand of iron over the nation.

When he had finished, his colleagues, one after the other, including Delestang, affirmed that the Empire was in no danger, and that Rougon's view was unreasonably gloomy. When a storm seemed brewing among his advisers, the Emperor raised his hand, and stopped the discussion, saying : " Well, well, we have travelled away from current affairs. We shall see." Then he rose and added : " It is late, gentlemen, you will breakfast at the Castle. A word with you, I beg, Monsieur Rougon."

While the Emperor talked with M. Rougon, the rest of the ministers in a distant part of the room congratulated Delestang. The Emperor led his Minister into his cabinet, where after having lit a cigarette, and shown him the model of a new gun, he twitted him with the misdeeds of some of the creatures he had placed in responsible offices. Gilquin, Kahn, Du Poizat, and the rest, had each compromised their patron ; and his enemies at Court, who were many and powerful, had primed the Emperor with every little incident, all to the disadvantage of Rougon. The Emperor ended with the remark : " You have too many friends, Monsieur Rougon, they do you harm. Come, grant me the dismissal of Monsieur Du Poizat, and leave the rest to themselves."

But Rougon was firm, and replied that far from deserting his friends he had more favours to ask for them. Drawing his notes from his pocket, he read the list. The Emperor laughed and said : "Is that all? You are an heroic patron. Your friends must adore you."

"No, sire, they don't adore, they support me. I wish with all my heart, that, for the greatness of your reign, your Majesty may long keep about you the devoted servants who helped you to restore the Empire."

The Emperor fell into one of his habitual reveries, and broke off the conversation, with the assurance that Monsieur Rougon had his entire confidence, and might proceed without hesitation with his vigorous measures.

After breakfast, when Clorinde entered the room where the gentlemen were taking coffee, in a circle round the Emperor, His Majesty accosted her, and plied her so hard with questions and attentions, that the Minister of State drew her husband out upon the terrace, while the rest amused themselves with discreet glances at the Sovereign, who pressed his suit with vigour.

Clorinde was now the most influential woman in Paris, and persons of all ranks and dignities flocked to her untidy hotel. She was the centre of many intrigues, she had relations with every Court—in a word, she wanted Rougon no longer.

She remained eccentric in her grandeur, and installed herself in a *cabinet particulier* of a great Boulevard restaurant, where she gave audiences to the notabilities of the world. She had turned the tables on her old master, and now received the band who used to fill his salons on Thursdays and Sundays at her house, where they talked about, and against, him. They agreed that his power was on the decline, and endeavoured to prove to each other that they owed him nothing. They had been, on the contrary, compromised by his protection. It was now Delestang who supported Rougon, and Clorinde declared that her husband would be in Rougon's place *when she chose*.

At Court the great subject was the Emperor's passion for Clorinde. Every kind of abuse was heaped upon Rougon, and abominable stories of the doings of his creatures were circulated. His enemies were preparing his fall, his enemies being the friends whom he had helped, with Clorinde as leader. When all was ripe, it was arranged that Clorinde should go on a visit to the Court at Fontainebleau, and that at the same time De Marsy should repair thither to divert the Empress.

When Clorinde returned she had *chosen* to make her husband Minister of the Interior, *vice* Rougon who had been compelled to send in his resignation. On the day of her return from

Fontainebleau, she wore at a fancy fair in the Tuileries Gardens, where she served the beer to the gentlemen, a bracelet upon her arm on which were inscribed the words, *J'appartiens à mon Maître*.

This is an outline of contemporary history, lately written by Monsieur Émile Zola in the form of a romance. That a man of M Zola's literary power should descend to such work is to be regretted, but that his countrymen should accept it is to be deeply deplored. In political warfare, is there no chivalry left in France? The roman-cist who seeks applause by libellous caricatures of the dead who cannot speak, and of the living who may not, can only tarnish a good cause, and farther discredit a bad one. The society which accepts and pets him is in a state of corruption. M. Zola, however, is a writer of the rose-water school, when compared with the author of *Le Fils d'un de ces Hommes*. I remember my father saying, when proposing the health of Leigh Hunt, at a club dinner, that he filled his sling with shining pebbles from the brook, and never pelted his enemies with mud. It is sad to say that just now, among political controversialists in France, mud is the popular missile.

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CITIZEN GUGUSSE AT PLAY.

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GUGUSSE has a gay heart, easy morals (vices which he wears audaciously on his sleeve), and opinions of the most daring description. He is one of the sovereign people ; and with his low cap pulled over his ear, it is his belief that he looks every inch that thirty-six-millionth part of a king which he is. He respects nobody ; but it is the duty of everybody to respect him. He has no superior. President, ministers, senators, deputies, prefects, marshals, generals, and admirals are his *employés*—revocable at his pleasure. He has no superior. To him religion is an *enfantillage* that captivates the weak female mind. “Everything by the people, for the people,” is his political maxim. “La propriété c’est le vol,” is to him Proudhon’s sublimest dictum. The *aristo* is a bird of prey to be got rid of, so that the sovereignty of the *peup’* may be complete. To Gugusse M. Gambetta was no longer so pure after

he had been in sumptuous lodgings, and dropped his pipe, and foresworn the Café de Madrid. But then Gugusse puts his trust in no individual—only in the *peup'*.

Time was when, on holidays, he was content to take his wife or his mistress to the *barrière* for a *giblotte*, a *litre*, and a dance; when he listened to the Utopists who successively wooed the suffrages of the work-folk; and if he was led astray at times by their dreams, returned penitently to his patron, and continued to save some of his wages. He had more than a dose of Utopia when Albert, Louis Blanc, Thomas, and the rest of them promised wages irrespective of work, and said that any man had a right to claim a salary from the State when his trade was stagnant. The famous promises were drowned in the blood of the awful days of June, or ended in prison or exile. And then how did the leading Communards carry out their treaty with the sovereign people? The plain of Satory and the wilds of New Caledonia saw the end of *that* delusion.

And yet Gugusse, as he sallies forth—seldom with wife or children or even mistress now, but with a wine-shop pal or two—for a holiday, carries his nose cocked in the air, his cap set at the passer-by, and his insolent eyes fixed mockingly upon any man who is *réac'* enough to wear a decent coat and show a clean shirt to the sovereign people. He reads



the proclamation, manifesto, order, or decree pasted upon the *mairie* or prefectural walls with a running commentary of slang. The Marshal is a *capitularde* and an *imbécile*, the Ministers are *crétins*, the prefect of police is a—well, the epithet is *ordurier*, to use the new word which has been freely introduced into French political writing of late. The powers that be having been dismissed with a final gesture of low defiance, Gugusse thrusts his pipe back into his mouth and passes on to the nearest wine-shop, where he will find absinthe and the *Siècle*, and be able, while he burns the coats of his stomach, to assure himself that he is the only legitimate source of power.

Who remembers Gugusse *père*, the thrifty, intelligent, well-bred fellow (for in those days the work-folk of France were men of refinement), who took his liberal share of holidays, but took them soberly and decently? His mind was exercised by St. Simonism, Fourierism, and other isms by which political dreamers, not always of the most unselfish character, successively strove to make him discontented with his comfortable lot: but he was an orderly father of a family; he valued the good opinion of his patron; he had no idea that he was derogating from his dignity when he touched his hat to his betters; and at the same time he was properly jealous of any attack upon his *dignité d'homme*. His *fête*, as well as that of his mother,

his sister, and his wife, meant a trip outside the *barrières*, a frugal meal, a glass of beer in the evening, a ball at a sou a dance, an open-air concert. He was no stranger to the charms of St. Monday. He could take his part of a *litre* with a shopmate at the *cabaret*; he could enjoy an evening at dominoes; he could play billiards; and it happened, but at very long intervals, that he returned to his household gods *entre deux vins*.

But Gugusse *père* was, as a rule, a sober man, who scorned the *noceur*, the sot, the slave of the wine-shop whose hand lost its cunning, trembling with the effects of the *vin à quat' sous*, and who shouted the glories of the grape in his cups—with the soothing refrain,

Remercions Dieu  
Qu'ils n'en ont pas en Angleterre.

Gugusse the elder, moreover, knew more than his son, one of the sovereign people, knows. He was a notable Gavot or Devoirant, had carved a trophy of his trade, had made the tour of France as a journeyman; and he took pride in his skill and his taste. Gugusse *fils* is at best a mere plodding mechanic. He knows nothing of the science or history of his trade: but he can tell you the last anecdote to the disadvantage of the Marshal; he is a master of the *argot* of demagogism; and seldom working more than four days in a week, he is

voluble about the sweat of his brow, the glory of labour, and the infamy of riches.

A more vicious, cunning, misanthropical, and satirical human animal than citizen Gugusse, in short, does not exist on the face of the earth. The Church, the home, the Government, the school, the very Chamber which he elects, are one and all, according to him, bad to the core. The world is rotten—a *pourriture* intended to be the hot-bed of wit. Therefore Gugusse at play is Gugusse blistering every human and divine institution with his venomous tongue,—leaning over the pewter bar of his *cabaret*, sitting at table over his pipe in his *café*, lying at full length upon the grass in the Bois, or in one of the beautiful public gardens which Badin-guet spread for him, that he might beslime the giver at his ease. Gugusse out for a holiday is Gugusse having a bout at football with the institutions of his country, and with the honour of the illustrious among his countrymen.

General Stoffel, who deplores, as well he may, the pass to which the French people have come, has only to take a turn in the establishments which Gugusse patronises, if he wants a full explanation of the national decay. The artisans who never meddle with politics, but work and save after the good old fashion; the “rurals,” whom the demagogues despise because they will tend their vines, and plough their acre of land, and live frugal un-

eventful lives, with a stocking full of silver under their thatch or buried in a flower-pot ; and who will not listen to the Barodets and Floquets, nor enter upon another agricultural speculation in the shape of a *Jacquerie* ;—these sinews of wealthy France and producers of the wonderful budgets which crop up every year, in spite of war, communism, and the screaming law-makers of Versailles, heartily despise and hate citizen Gugusse, when he swaggers into the wine-shop and spends his holiday in *bézique* and slander, moistened by *cassis-melé* and absinthe. Gugusse represents the rising generation, however ; and it is with whole cities full of Gugusses that the nation will have to reckon presently. They have done bad work enough already, but they promise to begin again soon, and this time to put all former deeds in the shade.

Gugusse has ceased to dance. How many of us who have passed out of the thirties can remember the *pas seul* of Gugusse out for a holiday ? It began quietly, with a gentle swaying of the body, and was gradually brought to a pitch at which the dancer appeared to have gone mad. He threw up his right foot to the level of the ladies' chins and shook it ; he repeated the accomplishment with his left leg ; then he advanced, opening and shutting his legs like the frames on which children's soldiers are made to move ; he executed a tour squatting on his haunches ; and finally he threw a catherine wheel,

recovered his feet, bowed, and let the dance go forward. He was rewarded with the smiles of the ladies and the applause of the bystanders; and he was a proud man when, the quadrille over, he led his partner away for a *syrop*.

Gugusse in those innocent days would gallantly take a turn at the humble wheel of fortune for the chance of a lump of gingerbread, or have a shot at the revolving hare, in the hope of presenting his mistress with a coffee-cup. He was to be seen, happy as a king, on the wooden horse of the merry-go-round.

The thirty-six millionth atom of the sovereign people does not dance—he swaggers. He has taken upon his shoulders, with a shrug, the fortunes of France; can he be expected to condescend to the *barrière* wheel where the gingerbread of Dijon is the only stake? His merry-go-round is a tour of the Belleville wine-shops, where he proves that De Broglie is a rascal, and that *père* Thiers was just an astute little Marseillais *bourgeois*, who furnished himself a splendid hôtel, and filched millions out of the *peup'*.

If Gugusse could only be seen in a *contre danse* once more, there would be hope for France.



